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Trans-Himalaya

Discoveries and Adventures in Tibet

BY

SVEN HEDIN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

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TRANS-HIMALAYA

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CHAPTER XXXV

IMMURED MONKS

We had heard of a lama who had lived for the last three years in a cave in the valley above the monastery of Linga, and though I knew that I should not be allowed to see either the monk or the interior of his ghastly dwelling, I would not miss the opportunity of at least gaining some slight notion of how he was housed.

On April 16, 1907, eighteen months to a day after I had left Stockholm, dreary windy weather prevailed, with thickly falling snow and dense clouds. We rode up to Linga, past rows of fine *chhortens*, left the last dormitories behind us, saw an old tree-trunk painted white and red, passed a small pool with crystal-clear spring water thinly frozen over, and heaps of *mani*-stones with streamer poles, and then arrived at the small convent Samde-puk, built on the very point of a spur between two side valleys. It is affiliated to the Linga monastery, and has only four brethren, who all came to greet me heartily at the entrance.

It is a miniature copy, outwardly and inwardly, of those we have seen before. The *dukang* has only three pillars and one divan for the four monks, who read the mass together, nine prayer-cylinders of medium size which are set in motion by leathern straps, a drum and a gong, two masks with diadems of skulls, and a row of idols, among which may be recognized several copies of Chenresi and Sekiya Kŏngma, the chief abbot of Sekiya.

A few steps to the south-west we passed over a sheet of

schist with two stone huts at its foot containing brushwood and twigs for burning. In Samde-pu-pe were two small temples with altars of mud. In one of them were idols of medium size and sea shells, and before them incense smouldered, not in the usual form of sticks, but in powder. It was strewn in a zigzag line, was lighted at one end, and allowed to smoulder away to the other. Within was a statue of Lovun with two lights before it, and a shelf with writings called Chöna. Rain water had percolated in and formed white vertical channels in the plaster, and under the ceiling *kadakhs* and draperies fluttered in the draught. Here the mice were less disturbed than in the ghostly castle Pesu.

Close at hand at the foot of the mountain is the hermitage, *dupkang*, in which a hermit spends his days and years. It is built over a spring which bubbles up in the centre of the single room, a square apartment with each side five paces long. The walls are very thick, and are in one solid mass, unbroken by windows. The doorway is very low, and the wooden door is shut and locked; but that is not enough, so a wall of large blocks and smaller stones has been built before the door, and even the smallest interstices between them have been carefully filled up with pebbles. Not an inch of the door can be seen. But beside the entrance is a tiny tunnel through which the hermit's food can be pushed in. The amount of daylight which can penetrate through the long narrow loophole must be very small; and it does not shine in direct, for the front of the hut is shut in by a wall, forming a small court, which only the monk who brings the anchorite his daily ration may enter. A small chimney rises from the flat roof, for the hermit may make himself tea every sixth day, and for this purpose some sticks of firewood are pushed through the loophole twice in the month. Through the chimney, too, a feeble light may fall, and by means of these two vents the air is renewed in the cell.

"What is the name of the lama who is now walled up in this cell?" I asked.

"He has no name, and even if we knew it we durst not utter

it. We call him merely the Lama Rinpoche" (according to Köppen, lama means *quo nemo est superior*, one who has no one over him; and Rinpoche means gem, jewel, holiness).

"Where has he come from?"

"He was born in Ngor in Naktsang."

"Has he relations?"

"That we do not know; and if he has any, they do not know that he is here."

"How long has he lived in the darkness?"

"It is now three years since he went in."

"And how long will he remain there?"

"Until he dies."

"May he never come out again into the daylight before his death?"

"No; he has taken the strictest of all oaths, namely, the sacred vow only to leave the cell as a corpse."

"How old is he?"

"We do not know his age, but he looked about forty."

"But what happens if he is ill? Cannot he get help?"

"No; he may never speak to another human being. If he falls ill he must wait patiently till he is better again or dies."

"You never know, then, how he is?"

"Not before his death. A bowl of *tsamba* is pushed every day into the opening, and a piece of tea and a piece of butter every sixth day; this he takes at night, and puts back the empty bowl to be filled for the next meal. When we find the bowl untouched in the opening we know that the immured man is unwell. If he has not touched the *tsamba* the next day our fears increase; and if six days pass and the food is not taken, we conclude he is dead and break open the entrance."

"Has that ever happened?"

"Yes; three years ago a lama died, who had spent twelve years in there, and fifteen years ago one died who had lived forty years in solitude and entered the darkness at the age of twenty. No doubt the Bombo has heard in Tong of the lama

who lived in the hermitage of the monastery Lung-ganden-gompa for sixty-nine years, completely shut off from the world and the light of day."

"But is it not possible that the prisoner may speak to the monk who pushes the *tsamba* dish into the loophole? There is no witness present to see that all is correct."

"That could never happen and is not allowed," answered my informant with a smile; "for the monk outside would be eternally damned were he to set his mouth to the loophole and try to talk to the recluse, and the latter would break the charm if he spoke from within. If the man in there were to speak now, the three years he has passed there already would not be put down to his credit, and he would not like that. If, however, a lama in Linga or Samde-puk falls ill, he may write his complaint and a request for the anchorite's intercession on a piece of paper, which is placed in the *tsamba* bowl and pushed into the opening. Then the recluse prays for the sick man, and if the latter has faith in the power of prayer, and holds no unseemly conversation in the meantime, the intercession of the Lama Rinpoche takes effect after two days and the patient gets well again. On the other hand, the recluse never makes any communication in writing."

"We are now only a couple of paces from him. Does he not hear what we are saying, or, at least, that some one is talking outside his den?"

"No, the sound of our voices cannot reach him, the walls are too thick; and even if it were the case, he would not notice it, for he is buried in contemplation. He no longer belongs to this world; he probably crouches day and night in a corner, repeating prayers he knows by heart, or reading in the holy books he has with him."

"Then he must have enough light to read by?"

"Yes, a small butter lamp stands on a shelf before two images, and its light suffices him. When the lamp goes out it is pitch-dark inside."

Filled with strange thoughts I took leave of the monk and went slowly down the path which the recluse had only passed

along once in his life. Before us was the splendid view which might never delight his eyes. When I had descended to the camp I could not look up the monastery valley without thinking of the unfortunate man sitting up there in his dark hole.

Poor, nameless, unknown to any one, he came to Linga, where, he had heard, a cave-dwelling stood vacant, and informed the monks that he had taken the vow to enter for ever into darkness. When his last day in this world of vanity dawned, all the monks of Linga followed him in deep silence, with the solemnity of a funeral, to his grave in the cave, and the door was closed on him for the rest of his life. I could picture to myself the remarkable procession, the monks in their red frocks, silent and grave, bending their bodies forward and turning their eyes to the ground, and walking slowly step by step as though they would let the victim enjoy the sun and light as long as possible. Were they inspired with admiration of his tremendous fortitude, compared with which everything I can conceive, even dangers infallibly leading to death, seems to me insignificant? For, as far as I can judge, less fortitude is required when a hero, like Hirosé, blockades the entrance of Port Arthur, knowing that the batteries above will annihilate him, than to allow oneself to be buried alive in the darkness for forty or sixty years. In the former case the suffering is short, the glory eternal; in the latter the victim is as unknown after death as in his lifetime, and the torture is endless, and can only be borne by a patience of which we can have no conception.

No doubt the monks escorted him with the same tenderness and the same sympathy as the priest feels when he attends a criminal to execution. But what can have been his own feelings during this last progress in the world? We all have to pass along this road, but we do not know when. But he knew, and he knew that the sun would never again shine warmly on his shoulders and would never produce lights and shadows on the heaven-kissing mountains around the grave that awaited him.

Now they have reached their destination and the door of the tomb stands open. They enter in, spread a mat of interlaced strips of cloth in a corner, set up the images of the gods, and lay the holy books in their place; in one corner they place a wooden frame like those go-carts in which infants learn to walk, and which he will not use till death comes upon him. They take their seats and recite prayers, not the usual prayers for the dead, but others which deal with the glorified light and life of Nirvana. They rise, bid him farewell, go out and close the door. Now he is alone and will never hear the sound of a human voice except his own, and when he says his prayers no one will be there to hear him.

What were his thoughts when the others had gone, and the short hollow echo had died away of the noise he heard when the door was shut for the last time, only to be opened again when he was a corpse? Perhaps something like what Fröding has expressed in his verse:

> Here breaks the soul from every bond,
> That fetters to this life its pinion;
> Here starts the way to the dark beyond,
> The land of eternal oblivion.

He hears the brethren rolling the heavy stones to the door with levers, piling them up one on another in several layers, and filling up all chinks with smaller stones and fragments. It is not yet quite dark, for there are crevices in the door, and daylight is still visible at the upper edge. But the wall rises. At length there is only a tiny opening through which the last beam falls into the interior of his tomb. Does he become desperate; does he jump up, thrust his hands against the door and try to catch one more glimpse of the sun, which in another moment will vanish from his sight for ever? No one knows and no one will ever know; not even the monks who were present and helped to block up the entrance can answer this question. But he is but a man and he saw how a flagstone was fitted over the hole through which a last ray of daylight fell; and now he has darkness before him, and wherever he turns there is impenetrable darkness.

He assumes that the other monks have gone down again to Samde-puk and Linga. How shall he pass the evening? He need not begin at once to read his holy books; there is plenty of time for that, perhaps forty years. He sits on the mat and leans his head against the wall. Now all his reminiscences come with great distinctness into his mind. He remembers the gigantic characters in the quartzite, "Om mani padme hum," and he murmurs half dreaming the holy syllables, "Oh! thou jewel in the lotus. Amen!" But only a feeble echo answers him. He waits and listens, and then hearkens to the voices of his memory. He wonders whether the first night is falling, but it cannot be darker than it is already in his prison, his grave. Overcome by the travail of his soul, he sleeps, tired and weary, in his corner.

When he awakes, he feels hungry, crawls to the opening and finds the bowl of *tsamba* in the tunnel. With water from the spring he prepares his meal, eats it, and, when he has finished, puts the bowl in the loophole again. Then he sits cross-legged, his rosary in his hands, and prays. One day he finds tea and butter in the bowl and some sticks beside it. He feels about with his hands and finds the flint, and steel, and the tinder, and kindles a small fire under the tea-can. By the light of the flame he sees the interior of his den again, lights the lamp before the images, and begins to read his books; but the fire goes out and six days must pass before he gets tea again.

The days pass and now comes autumn with its heavy rains; he hears them not, but the walls of his den seem to be moister than usual. It seems to him a long time since he saw the sun and the daylight for the last time. And years slip by and his memory grows weak and hazy. He has read the books he brought with him again and again, and he cares no more for them; he crouches in his corner and murmurs their contents, which he has long known by heart. He lets the beads of his rosary slip through his fingers mechanically, and stretches out his hand for the *tsamba* bowl unconsciously. He crawls along the walls feeling the cold stones with his hands, if haply

he may find a chink through which a ray of light can pass. No, he hardly knows now what it is like outside on sunny paths. How slowly time passes! Only in sleep does he forget his existence and escape from the hopelessness of the present. And he thinks: "What is a short earthly life in darkness compared to the glorious light of eternity?" The sojourn in darkness is only a preparation. Through days and nights and long years of solitude the pondering monk seeks the answer to the riddle of life and the riddle of death, and clings to the belief that he will live again in a glorified form of existence when his period of trial is over. It is faith alone which can explain his inconceivable fortitude of mind.

It is difficult to picture to oneself the changes through which the lama passes during successive decades in the darkness of his cell. His sight must become weak, perhaps be extinguished altogether. His muscles shrink, his senses become more and more clouded. Longing for the light cannot pursue him as a fixed idea, for it is in his power to write down his decision to curtail his time of trial, and return to the light, on one of the leaves of his books with a splinter dipped in soot. He has only to place such a paper in the empty *tsamba* bowl. But the monks had never known a case of the kind. They only knew that the lama who had been walled in for sixty-nine years had wished to see the sun again before he died. I had heard from monks who were in Tong at the time that he had written down his wish to be let out. He was all bent up together and as small as a child, and his body was nothing but a light-grey parchment-like skin and bones. His eyes had lost their colour, were quite bright and blind. His hair hung round his head in uncombed matted locks and was pure white. His body was covered only by a rag, for time had eaten away his clothing and he had received no new garments. He had a thin unkempt beard, and had never washed himself all the time or cut his nails. Of the monks who sixty-nine years before had conducted him to his cell, not one survived. He was then quite young himself, but all his contemporaries had been removed by death, and new

generations of monks had passed through the cloisters; he was a complete stranger to them all. And he had scarcely been carried out into the sunlight when he too gave up the ghost.

In analysing the state of such a soul, fancy has free play, for we know nothing about it. Waddell and Landon, who took part in Younghusband's expedition to Lhasa, and visited the hermits' caves at Nyang-tö-ki-pu, say that the monks who have there retired into perpetual darkness first underwent shorter experiences of isolation, the first lasting six months, and the second three years and ninety-three days, and that those who had passed through the second period of trial showed signs that they were intellectually inferior to other monks. The cases which the two Englishmen have described seem not to have been so severe a trial as the one I saw and heard about in Linga, for in the Nyang-tö-ki-pu caves the lama who waited on the recluse tapped on a stone slab which closed the small opening, and at this signal the immured lama put his hand out of this door for his food; he immediately drew the stone shutter to again, but in this way he would at least see the light of the sun for a moment every day. In the cases described by Waddell and Landon the immured monks had passed some twenty years in confinement. Waddell, who has a thorough knowledge of Lamaism, believes that the custom of seclusion for life is only an imitation of the practice of pure Indian Buddhism, which enjoins periodical retreats from the world for the purpose of self-examination and of acquiring greater clearness in abstruse questions. In his opinion the Tibetans have made an end of the means.

Undoubtedly this opinion is correct, but it is not exhaustive. It may be that the future hermit has in religious delusion come to the decision to allow himself to be buried alive. But does he clearly conceive what this means? If he became dull and insensible like an animal in his cell, all his energy and his power of will would be deadened, and what seemed to him, when he entered, to be worth striving for, would gradually become more and more indifferent to him. But this is not

the case, for he adheres firmly to his decision, and therefore his energy must remain unimpaired. He must possess a steadfast faith, an immovable conviction, which is exposed to a harder trial because he is alone and death alone can visit him in his cave. Possibly he becomes by degrees a victim of self-delusion, so that his longing for the last hour in the long night of his den gives place to the feeling that he is always at the moment when the hour-glass of time has run down. He must have lost all idea of time, and the darkness of the grave appears to him only as a second in eternity. For the means he formerly had of marking the flight of time and impressing it on his memory no longer exist. The changes from winter to summer, from day to night, are only made known to him by the rise or fall of the temperature in his den. He remembers that several rainy seasons have passed by, and perhaps they seem to him to follow closely on one another while his brain is clouded by monotony. It is inconceivable that he does not become insane, that he does not call out for the light, that he does not jump up and run his head against the wall in the agony of despair, or beat it against the sharp edges of the stones till he bleeds to death and frees himself by committing suicide.

But he waits patiently for death, and death may delay its coming for ten or twenty years. His remembrance of the world and life outside his cell becomes fainter and fainter; he has long forgotten the dawn in the east and the golden clouds of sunset; and when he looks up his dimmed eyes perceive no stars twinkling in the night, only the black ceiling of his cave. At last, however, after long years have passed in the darkness, suddenly a great brilliancy flashes out—that is, when Death comes, takes him by the hand, and leads him out. And Death has not to wait, entreat, and coax, for the lama has waited and longed for his welcome and only guest and deliverer. If he has had his mind still clear, he has taken the little wooden stand under his arms so that he may die in the same sacred position in which Buddha is represented in all the thousands of statues and pictures which have come under

our notice in our wanderings through the cloister temples of Tibet.

When the *tsamba* bowl, which has been filled daily for so many long years, remains at last untouched and the six days have expired, the cave is opened and the abbot of the monastery sits down beside the deceased and prays for him, while all the other monks pray in the *dukang* hall for five or six days together. Then the body is wrapped in a white garment, a covering called *ringa* is placed on his head, and he is burned on a pyre. The ashes are collected, kneaded together with clay, and moulded into a small pyramid, which is deposited in a *chhorten*.

The Linga monks said that an ordinary lama, when he dies, is cut in pieces, and abandoned to the birds. This process is performed here by five lamas, who, though they belong to the monastery, attend the service in the *dukang*, and drink tea with the other monks, are still considered unclean, and may not eat with the other brethren. Also when nomads die in the neighbourhood, their services are required, but then the relatives are bound to provide them with horses and to undertake that the property of the deceased shall pass into the possession of the monastery.

For days and weeks I could not drive away the picture I had formed in my mind of the Lama Rinpoche, before whose cell we had stood and talked. And still less could I forget his predecessor, who had lived there forty years. I fancied I could hear the conch which summoned the monks to the funeral mass of the departed. I pictured to myself the scene in the cave where the lama, crouching in rags on the floor, stretches out his withered hands to Death, who, kindly smiling like the skull masks in the temples, gives him one hand while he holds a brightly burning lamp in the other. The features of the monk are transfigured in a reflexion of Nirvana, and forgetting the "Om mani padme hum" that for tens of years has reverberated from the walls of his den, he raises, as the trumpet blasts sound out from the temple roof, a song of victory, which calls to mind the following strophe

from the myths of another people (*Frithiof's Saga*, Blackley's translation):

Hail, ye deities bright!
Ye Valhalla sons!
Earth fadeth away; to the heavenly feast
Glad trumpets invite
Me, and blessedness crowns,
As fair, as with gold helm, your hastening guest.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OVER THE CHANG-LA-POD-LA

We had stayed three days near the monastery Linga, when we went on north-westwards on April 17 up the narrow My-chu valley, in which the volume of water was now considerably diminished. Space does not permit me to describe in detail this wonderful road and its wild beauty. From the expansion of the valley at Linga routes run eastwards and westwards into the mountains, with branches to numerous villages, of which I noted down the names and approximate positions. The traffic is now much less, but still numerous *manis* and other religious symbols stand beside the solitary path.

We ride along the steep slopes of the right bank; below us the river forms rapids, and the way is dangerous, especially with a horse that is not sure on its feet. Robert's small bay filly stumbled and fell, so that the rider was thrown headlong to the ground. Had he rolled down the slope he would have been lost; but fortunately he fell towards the mountain.

We encamped in the village Langmar, consisting of a few scattered houses, at the entrance of the small side valley Langmar-pu.

We still have hired horses, and now yaks also, and the caravan is divided into the same detachments as before. Sonam Tsering and Guffaru command their sections. Tsering's party sets out last and is the last to come to rest, and Muhamed Isa supervises the whole. In the evening he is massaged by two men selected for the purpose, of whom Rehim Ali is one. There is still *chang*, the harmless, but still intoxicating, beer.

Among the singers at the camp-fires, Tsering, as usual, deserves the first prize. He gives me no end of amusement; he sings like a cow, or at best like a burst temple drum. His voice cracks continually, and he loses the time and the melody without being the least put out. But he considers his singing very fine, and the others take pleasure in it; one can tell from a distance that the tears are coming into his eyes. Sometimes he pauses to explain the subject of the ballad and take a drink, and then he goes on again. When all the others are asleep, and all is so quiet in the camp that the rushing of the stream is audible and from time to time the bark of a dog, Tsering's rough voice trilling harshly still resounds among the mountains.

Next day we draw near to the main crest of the Trans-Himalaya, for to my great surprise and delight we have been conducted in this direction. Granite still predominates, and in it erosion has excavated the wild forms of the valleys; the way is tolerably good, but very stony; small strips of ice lie along both banks of the stream, within which the bright green water fills the valley with the roar of its impetuosity. The dark green of a kind of juniper called *pama* is a relief to the eyes, which otherwise perceive nothing but grey slopes of detritus.

The river here is named Langmar-tsangpo, but it is really only the upper course of the My-chu. It is formed by the Ke-tsangpo coming from the north and the Govo-tsangpo from the west. The former, called in its upper course Ogorung-tsangpo, descends from the main watershed of the Trans-Himalaya, and must therefore be considered the main stream. I was told that its source may be reached in a day and a half from the junction of the valleys. On the left bank of the Govo a thicket of *pama* shrubs grows, and a safe bridge of three arches spans the river. Over this bridge runs the important trade route to Tok-jalung which I have mentioned above. Herds of yaks and flocks of sheep graze on the slopes, and circular penfolds remind us of our life in the Chang-tang. A little farther up we cross the Govo, which is half frozen

over; springs and brooks from the side valleys adorn the scene with cascades of ice. The river is said to be here so swollen in summer that it cannot be crossed at any point. To the north and south snowy mountains are visible.

In the village of Govo, consisting of seven stone houses, barley is cultivated and yields a moderate crop; but the inhabitants are not dependent on the harvest, for they also possess sheep, goats, and yaks, with which they migrate northwards in summer. Govo is the last village where agriculture is pursued, so we here find ourselves on the boundary between tillage and grazing, and also between stone houses and black tents.

We have, then, still time to look into an ordinary Tibetan stone hut belonging to a family in comfortable circumstances. The walls are built of untrimmed bare stones, but the crevices are stopped with earth to keep out the wind. Through a labyrinth of walls and over round stones where the tripping foot seldom touches the ground we come to two yards where goats and calves are kept. In a third is a loom, at which a half-naked coppery-brown woman is working, and in a fourth sits an old man engaged in cutting up *pama* shrubs.

From this yard we entered a half-dark room, with a floor of mud, and two openings in the roof, through which the smoke escapes and the daylight enters. The roof consists of beams overlaid with a thatch of brushwood, which is covered all over with soil and flat stones—it must be nice and dry when it rains. There sat an elderly woman telling off her *manis* on a rosary of porcelain beads.

The next room is the kitchen, the general living-room and the principal apartment of the house. At a projecting wall stands the stone cooking-range with round black-edged holes for saucepans and teapots of baked clay. A large earthen pot, standing on the fire, contains barley, which is eaten parched; a stick with a stiff piece of leather at the end is twirled round in the barley between the palms so that it may be roasted equally. It tastes delicious.

I went about, turned over all the household utensils and made an inventory, and not in Swedish only, but also in

Tibetan. There were many different vessels of iron, clay, and wood for all kinds of purposes, a large wooden ladle, a tea sieve of sheet-iron, an iron spoon, an ash shovel, iron fire-tongs, and a thing called a *thagma*, an iron blade fitted into a piece of wood, something like a closed pocket-knife, and used to dress newly woven material. A large clay jug was filled with *chang*. A small cubical vessel divided into four by small cross pieces of wood is used to measure corn. Brick-tea is pulverized with a stone shaped like a cucumber in a deep wooden cup. A knife-blade with a haft at either end is used in preparing and tawing hides. Under one of the smoke vents stood a small hearth for an open fire with an iron tripod. A large leathern sack was filled with *tsamba*, and two sheep's stomachs held fat and butter. On a rack a quantity of sheep's trotters, dusty and dirty, were arranged; when they are several months old they are used to make soup, which is thickened with *tsamba*. Tea, salt, and tobacco are kept in large and small bags.

We saw likewise all kinds of religious objects, votive bowls, joss-sticks, and small image cases; also bales of home-woven textiles, coloured ribands for sewing on skin coats and boots, knives, hatchets, sabres and spears, which, we are told, are for fighting thieves and robbers; a pair of bellows, two sacks of dry dung for fuel, baskets, hand-mills for grinding barley, consisting of two round flat stones with a handle on the upper one; lastly, an oil-lamp and an oil-can, and a cylindrical tub with iron hoops full of water. In a corner lay heaps of skins and garments, and against the wall were two sleeping-places still in disorder.

In another store-room there were provisions in sacks, barley, green fodder, peas, and great joints of meat. Here three young women and a troop of children had taken refuge; we left them room to escape, and they ran away screaming loudly as if all the knives in the house were at their throats. In the room were balances for weighing, consisting of a rounded staff with a stone weight at one end and a dried yak hide at the other. Behind a partition straw was kept. There are

high inconvenient thresholds between the rooms, and the usual bundles of rods on the roof to protect the house from evil spirits.

After this expedition we inspected the tents of our escort, where a fire was burning in a broken clay pot, and a skillet stood over it on a tripod. The smoke escapes through the long slit between the two halves of which the tent is composed. The owners of the tent were writing their report to the authorities in Shigatse, informing them that we were on the right road. At the same time they were eating their dinner of mutton, a year old, dry and hard; it must not come near the fire. One of them cut it into strips and distributed it among his comrades. He had been for twenty years a lama in the monastery Lung-ganden in Tong, but a few years before had been ejected from the confraternity because he had fallen in love with a woman. He spoke of it himself, so it was doubtless true.

Robert's bay horse was reported dead on the morning of April 20. His late tumble now seemed to us like an omen; though fat and sleek, he died suddenly about midnight. We now ride on again towards higher regions over uncomfortable blocks of stone, but the valley becomes more open and the relative heights diminish. Though the little that is left of the stream still swirls and foams, the ice becomes thicker, and at last covers almost all the bed, and the water is heard rushing and murmuring under it. Juicy moss skirts the banks, the view becomes more extensive, and the whole character of the landscape becomes alpine. We saw ten men with guns in a sheep-fold, carrying gun-rests with yellow and red pennants on one of the prongs; perhaps they were highway robbers. Dark clouds sweep over the ridges, and in a minute we are in the midst of icy-cold drifting snow, but it does not last long.

The last bit of road was awful, nothing but boulders and débris, which we could sometimes avoid by riding over the ice of the river. The camping-ground was called Chomo-sumdo, a valley fork in a desolate region, but the escort had seen that some straw and barley were brought up on yaks for our horses.

From here we had to ride on the ice, smooth and firm after 27 degrees of frost in the night. The neighbourhood is not, however, uninhabited, for yaks and sheep were seen grazing in many places, belonging to nomads migrating northwards or merchants coming from Tok-jalung. At two black tents the people were packing up for the day's march; they had goats, with strips of red cloth bound round the ears.

A little farther up is a precipitous rock on the right side of the valley, and two caves open their black mouths in the wall. The lower one is the entrance to a passage leading to the upper, where a famous hermit has fixed his solitary abode. The upper opening has a partly natural balcony decorated with streamer-poles and ribands. Below the lower stand *mani* cairns, long garlands of string with coloured prayer-strips, a prayer-mast, and a metal idol in a niche of the rock.

We tethered our horses at the edge of the ice and went up to the lower grotto. Here two young nuns from Kirong (on the border of Nepal) met us, and two mendicant monks from Nepal, one of whom spoke Hindustani, so that Robert could converse with him. The nuns were pretty, well-grown, sunburnt, and somewhat like gypsies; their large black eyes had the shimmer of velvet, and their black hair was parted on the forehead and fell in luxuriant waves over their shoulders; they were clothed in red rags, and wore Tibetan boots adorned with red ribands. They spoke cheerfully and pleasantly in strikingly soft, extremely sympathetic voices, and were not in the least timid. Their simple dwelling, which we saw, was in the great entrance of the grotto, under a smoke-blackened vault, surrounded by a small wall and a palisade of *pama* branches, and partly hung with cloth. A sleeping-place was made of rugs of interwoven strips of cloth, and a tea-kettle was boiling on the fire. One of the men had a thick pigtail and a red lama frock; the other wore a sheepskin, and had not had his hair cut in the present, twentieth, century. The dwelling proper was situated in a higher part of the cavern.

All four had come in autumn, and were waiting for the

warmer season to proceed to Lhasa, and return thence home again. In the meantime they voluntarily waited on the two holy hermits sojourning in this mountain, and thereby earned their living and gained merit, according to the ideas of their order. When they go off again on their wanderings, other serving brethren and sisters will be found ready to take their place.

A winding staircase on the left, partly natural and partly constructed of flagstones, leads to the upper regions of the cavern. At first it is dark, but becomes lighter as we approach a loophole in the rock. Here and there are streamer-poles, and the holy syllables are incised. From the loophole the staircase turns steeply to the right; if we slipped on the smooth stone we should tumble down right into the nuns' kitchen, which from here looks like the bottom of a well. The passage ends at a point where a small stone staircase goes up to a trap-door covered with a slab. Pushing aside the slab, one reaches the larger grotto chamber of which we had seen the opening from the valley. But the serving brothers and sisters would not take us so high.

In this upper grotto, Choma-taka, the 100-years-old hermit, Gunsang Ngurbu, of high repute in all the country for his holiness, has dwelt for seven years. Gunsang means hermit, and Ngurbu is a very common name signifying precious stone. Every seventh day his attendants place *tsamba*, water, tea, and fuel on the steps under the trap-door, and these things are taken in by the old man, who may not speak with men, but only with the gods. Through a hole under the slab I caught sight of a *chhorten* constructed of stones and mud, and some painted pictures of gods on the wall of the grotto. Behind the *chhorten*, and unfortunately out of sight, the old man sat in a niche in the wall, crouching down and saying his prayers; now and then he blows a shell horn.

I wished to push aside the shutter and mount into the upper grotto, but the consciences of my companions would not permit such a thing for all the money in the world. It would disturb the old man in his meditations, and interrupt the period of his seclusion, and, moreover, the old man would

throw stones at us. The life of the hermit Ngurbu must be idyllic compared to that of the immured Linga monks, for he sees the valley, the sun, the whirling snow, and the stars sparkling in the sky; but he must suffer from ennui. In another grotto, side by side with Ngurbu's, lives another hermit, but the two have never met and know nothing of one another. They may eat no meat, only *tsamba* and tea, and they receive these from the neighbouring nomads and the travellers passing along the road.

After this digression we cross the ice of the river again and pass up over the ever-present detritus. Before us is the flattish saddle of the Chang-la-Pod-la. We accomplish the ascent with great effort, the icy wind blowing right in our faces. I cannot commence my observations at the cairn till I have warmed my hands over a dung fire. The view is limited, flat, and of little use for orientation. However, towards the way we have come, we can see the deeply eroded valleys, and we seem to be higher than the ridges enclosing them. The height is 18,284 feet. Chang signifies north, north country; Pod or Pö, Tibet, *i.e.* Tibet proper, chiefly inhabited by a settled population. Chang-la-Pod-la is, then, the pass between the northern tableland of the nomads and the country to the south having drainage to the sea. It is this property of a boundary between these two regions which renders the Trans-Himalaya of such prime importance, and therefore there are many passes called Chang-la-Pod-la. Often and often I was told that a pass, whatever might be its especial name, was a Chang-la-Pod-la when it lay on the watershed between the inland drainage of the north and the river basin of the Tsangpo in the south. I had then crossed the Trans-Himalaya a second time by a pass lying 44 miles to the west of the Sela-la, and had been able to ascertain that the huge range of the Nien-chen-Tang-la extends thus far. It was still more my earnest desire to follow it step by step to the west.

After we had encamped on the pass, where the thermometer fell at night to $-9\frac{1}{2}°$, we rode on April 22 slowly down the valley of the Shak-chu river, which gradually becomes broader,

and is begirt by flat rounded mountains, in which rock *in situ* seldom occurs. We have passed from the maze of mountains intersected by the affluents of the My-chu, abundantly fed by the rains, on to the wide plains of the plateau country, and notice again that the Trans-Himalaya is also an extraordinarily important climatological boundary.

The Lapsen-Tari is a heap of clods with a sheaf of rods stuck in the middle, from which streamer strings are carried to other rods. From this point there is a fine view over the plateau and its wreath of mountains. To the north, 55° west, we see the Targo-gangri again, but more majestic, more isolated, and more dominant than from the Ngangtse-tso, where, shrouded in clouds and surrounded by other mountains, it was less conspicuous.

Just at the mound we passed the last corner which obscured the view, and suddenly the whole grand mountain appeared in its dazzling whiteness, shining like a lighthouse over the sea of the plateau, in a mantle of firn fields and blue glistening ice, and rising bold and sharply against the sky of purest azure blue. The mound is therefore placed where the traveller coming from Shigatse first comes in sight of the holy mountain. Our guides bared their heads and murmured prayers. Two pilgrims, whom we had seen at the grotto of the hermits, lighted a fire and threw into it a scented powder, an offering of incense to the gods of Targo-gangri. South and south-west runs a lofty range, of uniform height, with patches of snow glittering in the sun on its brownish-purple summit—another part of the Trans-Himalaya.

As we sat here a trading caravan came along the road to Penla-buk, which lies on the west side of the Dangra-yum-tso, and is a rendezvous for gold-prospectors and wool-dealers. Our tents formed a little village on the Kyangdam plain, where wild asses abound, and some sixty nomads of the neighbourhood encamped around it.

In the evening the escort from Ghe presented themselves to inform me that as we were now in the Largep district, subject to the Labrang, they would return home and consign us to a

new guard. The latter consisted of five men far advanced in life. Their leader was a small grey-headed man with trembling hands and very indistinct enunciation. When the Ghe men, who longed to return to their warmer villages, had gone off next morning in spite of a violent storm, I had a serious talk with the new men. They intended to lead us over the pass Sha-la (Trans-Himalaya) in the south-west, where the Targo-tsangpo rises, on the banks of which we had passed the day. According to Nain Sing's map this river flows round the east side of Targo-gangri, and then enters the Dangra-tso, as the holy lake is called here. But Nain Sing was never there, and I wished to gain an insight into the geography of the country. So we came to an agreement that we should travel north-westwards; and I pointed out to the men that Raga-tasam was put down in our passport as the next place; that two roads led thither, one over the Sha-la, the other deviating northwards to the Targo-gangri, and that I had chosen the latter. The passport prohibited us from visiting Lhasa, Gyangtse, and the monastery Sekiya-gompa, but contained not a single word about the road to the Dangra-yum-tso. They ought then to comply with my wishes. The old man hesitated, pondered awhile, and summoned his followers to a council. His tent was soon full of black, bare-headed men in grey sheepskins. Then the consultation was adjourned to Muhamed Isa's tent. After some consideration they agreed to my proposals, on the condition that I should pay them a whole *tenga* per day for each yak instead of half a *tenga*. I rejoiced at the hope of seeing the holy mountain coming closer and closer, and its finer details becoming more conspicuous, of beholding it in cloud and sunshine, disappearing behind the hills and peeping out again like a man-of-war in a rough sea with high white waves round the bow, or, more correctly, like a ship under full sail on the sea of the plateau. Of course I exposed myself to annoyances by ignoring the passport, but geographical discoveries were concerned and all considerations must be set aside.

On Vega day, April 24, we had a strong wind in our faces,

it was cold, and Targo-gangri partly disappeared behind the clouds. Escorted by the old gentleman and four horsemen who were as much alike as if they had been cast in the same mould, and who had all matchlocks on their backs, I rode along the bank of the Targo-tsangpo in the contracting valley which slopes with an extremely gentle gradient, imperceptible to the eye, to the lake. At last the valley becomes so narrow that the ice fills all its bottom. The road therefore leaves the river on the left, and passes over flat hills, among which we cross a succession of small affluents. Black tents, tame yaks grazing, stone folds for sheep, wild asses, and millions of field mice recall to mind the Chang-tang. The wild yak, however, does not occur in this country. The feathered kingdom is represented by ravens, wild ducks, and occasionally a small bird. When we came to the Bumnak-chu, a right-hand tributary of the Targo-tsangpo, a large number of men came to meet us, saluting with the tongue, and gazing at us cheerfully and good-temperedly with their long black unkempt hair, their small grey skins, and their torn boots.

On April 25 we rode over the Ting-la pass; at its foot is a *mani* in good preservation, with a yak skull as ornament, a form of prayer being incised in the frontal bone between the horns. From the top of the pass Targo-gangri is seen expanded into a row of peaks covered with snow. The whole region is like a sea with a strong swell on, and the Targo-gangri is as white foaming surf on the coast. A little later the summits of the mass stood clearly out white on a background of bluish-black clouds; the highest two, twin peaks, had the form of a Tibetan tent on two poles.

Our camp in the Kokbo valley contained not fewer than eleven tents, for now we had about forty companions of all ages, and at least a hundred yaks. The loads were transferred to other yaks on the march to spare the animals. When the caravan moves over the rounded hills it is like a nomad tribe on the march. Most of our Tibetans ride yaks or horses.

We had made a short march, and plenty of time was left for me to go about, make a visit to each tent, and see how the men

were getting on. They were all drinking tea and eating *tsamba*, their greatest pleasure in life. The dung fire burns in the middle, and the form of the tent certainly is the cause of the draught which prevents smoke from collecting inside. Round about stand kettles, teapots, and wooden cups. A huge quantity of provisions lies at the sides. Saddles and harness are deposited in a row before the tent. When I enter, all rise, but I beg them to sit down again and go on eating, while I take a seat on a barley sack at the door of the tent. All have the right arm bare, and many both arms; when they let their sheepskins fall down their backs the whole body is naked down to the waist. They are copper-brown and covered with a layer of dirt, but well-grown, powerful, manly, and in good proportion. The cook of the tent community pours out tea for all, and then each one brings out his own bag and takes out a pinch of *tsamba* to sprinkle into his tea. They eat meat either raw or boiled in a pot. They are all quiet and orderly, no angry words are heard, no quarrelling and shouting, they are all the best of friends, and make themselves comfortable after their day's march, talking and laughing together. Their wigs are dust-traps and make them look like Indians. Most of them wear a pigtail, consisting mostly of plaited threads with white bone rings and small silver image boxes which have a couple of turquoises inlaid in the lid. Some have the pigtail wound round the head, forming a singular crown, the diadem of the wilderness.

In another tent the dinner was finished and the "covers" were empty. There a man sat with an awl, cobbling a torn boot; another sewed the girths of his saddle on firmly; and a third lay on his back, with legs crossed and an arm supporting his head, and took his after-dinner nap. Seen from above he makes a very absurd figure with his huge nostrils, into which mice might easily walk in mistake for their holes. A smirking youth is smoking his pipe, while his neighbour busily and carefully searches for suspected lodgers in his sheepskin.

I drew several of them without exciting the least uneasiness; on the contrary, they made a joke of the sitting, and laughed

heartily when they saw their counterfeits, which they embellished with prints of their buttery fingers on the margin. They asked me why I drew them, and for what purpose I wished to know their names and ages. They were all sympathetic, polite, and friendly, and I enjoyed their society.

A begging lama, too, looked in; he was on the way to Kailas, and was quickly sketched, to the intense amusement of the other men. He bore a lance with a black tassel and red strips, a timbrel, an antelope horn to protect himself against snappy dogs, and a trombone of human bone, which he set in a corner of his mouth when he blew it. It caused him much amusement to be the object of universal attention, and he took advantage of it to make acquaintance with the nomads with a view to an appeal to their liberality.

CHAPTER XXXVII

TARGO-GANGRI AND THE SHURU-TSO

HITHERTO we had experienced no difficulties, but at Kokbo the state of affairs seemed disquieting. Our old man informed me that he had sent a message to the nomads at the Targo-gangri mountain, asking them to hold yaks in readiness. They had answered that they could not think of serving a European without express orders, and that they would resort to force if our present guards led us to the lake. The old man, however, was not put out, but believed that he could soon bring them to their senses.

On April 26 we march north-westwards in a sharp wind over the pass Tarbung-la. The sacred mountain exhibits all the beauty of its sixteen peaks, and north, 33° west, is seen the gap where we expect to find the Dangra-yum-tso. The view is of immense extent. The valley widens out and passes into that of the Targo-tsangpo. Four antelopes spring lightly over the slopes; black tents are not to be seen.

When we again reach more open ground, one of the most magnificent views I have seen in this part of Tibet opens out to the west-south-west, a gigantic range of uniform height, with snow-covered pinnacles and short glaciers between, which is scarcely inferior to Targo-gangri in imposing beauty and massiveness. The chain is bluish black below the snowy points; at its foot lies a lake unknown to us, the Shuru-tso. The journey to the Ngangtse-tso north-north-east by the way of the Shang-buk-la pass is reckoned as only three days' march. On the eastern flank of Targo-gangri five glaciers are deeply

embedded, while to the east of the mountain the flat open valley of the Targo-tsangpo comes into sight, which we gradually approach, passing over five clearly defined terraces, relics of a time when the Dangra-yum-tso was much larger than now. Two wolves make off in front of us, and the old man gallops after them, but turns back when they stop as if to wait for him. "If I had had a knife or a gun," he says, "I would have killed them both."

At length we descend to the valley of the Targo-tsangpo down a bold terrace with two ledges, and here the river is divided into several arms, and wild ducks and geese swarm. Brushwood grows on the banks. On the right bank lies our camp, No. 150, not far from the foot of the majestic Targo-gangri.

Thus far we were to come, but no farther. Here a troop of twenty horsemen armed to the teeth awaited us, who had been sent by the Governor of Naktsang from Shansa-dzong, with orders to stop us "in case we should attempt to advance to the holy lake." This time they had kept a sharper watch, and had anticipated that I would take all kinds of liberties. They had left Shansa-dzong fifteen days before, and had been camping here three days, awaiting our arrival. If we had hurried we should have been before them again. One of the two leaders was the same Lundup Tsering who, as he told me himself, had stopped Dutreuil de Rhins and Grenard, and had been in January with Hlaje Tsering at the Ngangtse-tso. He informed me that Hlaje Tsering was still in office, but had had much trouble because of us, and had been obliged to pay a fine of sixty *yambaus* (about £675) to the Devashung. When I remarked that Hlaje Tsering had told me himself that he was so poor that he had nothing left to lose, Lundup answered that he had extorted the money from his subordinates. All, too, who had sold us yaks and served us as guides had been heavily fined. The next European who attempted to get through without a passport would have no end of difficulties to contend with.

Lundup pointed to a red granite promontory, 200 yards north

of our camp, and said: "There is the boundary between the Labrang (Tashi-lunpo) and Naktsang (Lhasa). So far we can let you go, but not a step farther; if you attempt it, we have orders to fire on you."

They read the passport from Shigatse, and affirmed that the words therein, "on the direct way to Ladak," did not mean that we had permission to make all sorts of detours, and, above all, we might not go to the Dangra-yum-tso, which is holy and is in the territory of Lhasa. Gaw Daloi had given orders that he should be informed daily which way we were travelling. If they did not obey this order they would lose their heads. It was evident, then, that I should have to give up the Dangra-yum-tso for the third time, and just when I was only two short days' march from it.

The outline of the mountain stood out sharp and white in the moonshine against the blue-black starry sky. The next day there was a storm, and not even the foot of Targo-gangri was visible, much less the icy-cold heights where the winds sing their heavenly choruses among the firn fields. In the evening, however, when the weather had cleared, the whole mass stood clearly out, covered with freshly fallen snow.

Again we held a long palaver with the horsemen from Naktsang. I told them that I would not leave this camp till I had at least seen the lake from a distance. To my delight they replied that though they were obliged, much against their inclination, to cause me the disappointment of not visiting the lake, they would not prevent me from seeing it from a distance, but that they would keep a good watch lest I should ride off behind yonder red mountain to the north.

They had scarcely gone when our old Kyangdam guide came to complain that the horsemen from Naktsang had threatened his life because he had brought me here. I sent for the Naktsang men again and impressed on them strongly that they had no cause of complaint against my escort, for it was entirely my fault that we were here. They promised that they would not again treat the Kyangdam men harshly, as they had most fortunately caught me just at the right moment.

The Kyangdam men could not thank me enough for restoring peace, and their joy was still greater when I presented the whole party with money to supplement their scanty store of provisions. They gave vent to their delight by performing games, dances, and wrestling bouts in front of my tent, and their happy laughter and shouts were echoed till late in the night from the mountains.

Then came twelve more soldiers from Naktsang with fresh orders that we were under no circumstances to be allowed to proceed farther northwards. But all were friendly and polite; we joked and laughed together, and were the best of friends. It is singular that they never lose their patience, though I am always causing them worry, perplexity, and troublesome journeys.

The chief of Largep was more unyielding than our old friends the Naktsang gentlemen. He would not let me climb the red mountain, but insisted that we should leave the district next day and travel straight to Raga-tasam. However, I snubbed him, demanding how he, a small chieftain in the mountains, could dare to speak so peremptorily. Even the Chinese in Lhasa, I said, had treated us pleasantly and had left us the fullest freedom. I would not leave the spot until I had seen the lake. I threatened to tear the Shigatse passport in pieces, and send off at once a courier to Tang Darin and Lien Darin, and wait for their answer at the foot of Targo-gangri. Then the chief became embarrassed, got up in silence, and went away with the others. But they were with me again in the evening, and with a humble smile they said that I might ride up the red mountain if I would promise not to go to the shore of the lake.

A thin veil of mist lay over the country all day long. But when the sun set, the western sky glowed with purple flames, and the cold glaciers and snowfields were thrown up by a background of fire.

At last, on April 29, we take to the road and ride up the affluent Chuma, flowing down from the right and called in its upper course Nagma-tsangpo. We climb higher and higher up regularly curved lake terraces; the view widens out the

nearer we approach the summit, where the Ladakis are waiting for us with a fire. The southern basin of the Dangra-yum-tso was clearly visible as a bluish sabre-blade, and the valley of the Targo-tsangpo widens out like a trumpet to the broad plain beside the shore. It was the easier to trace the course of the river to the neighbourhood of the lake because it was marked all along by white glistening ice flakes and dark spots where bushes grow. At the end of July the river is said to rise so high that it cannot be crossed. So when letters have to be delivered to nomads on the eastern foot of the mountain they are weighted with a stone and thrown across a narrow part of the stream.

The water of the lake is said to be as salt as that of the Ngangtse-tso, and is not fit for drinking; but nevertheless pilgrims drink it, because it is holy. At this time the winter ice was breaking up, and long sheets of ice lay only at the shore. In contrast to most other lakes of Tibet, the Dangra-yum-tso runs north and south, and it narrows in the middle, just as Nain Sing has drawn it on his map; but he has made the lake a little too large, and has especially exaggerated the dimensions of the southern basin. A horseman can travel round the lake in five ordinary or seven short days' journey; the pilgrim road closely follows the lake shore. The pilgrims always make the circuit of the lake in the direction of the hands of a watch, if they are orthodox; but if they belong to the Pembo sect, like the monks of the Sershik-gompa, they begin their march in the opposite direction. Most of them come in late summer or autumn. I was told that the pilgrimage round the lake, which of course must be made on foot, was in honour of Padma Sambhava, the saint who came to Tibet in the year 747, became the founder of Lamaism, and enjoys almost as great a reputation as Buddha himself. He is called in Tibet Lopön Rinpoche, and his image is generally found in the temples.

Sershik-gompa, of which we had frequently heard, and which Nain Sing names Sasik Gombas on his map, stands on an even slope at the eastern foot of the mountain. The monastery is

under the Devashung, and has twenty Pembo brethren and an abbot named Tibha. Some of the monks are said to be well off, but on the whole the convent is not rich; it is supported by nomads in Naktsang, Largep, and Sershik. The monastery is constructed chiefly of stone, but it also contains timber transported hither from the Shang valley. There is a *dukang* and a number of small images of gods. The Targo-gangri massive can also be travelled round, and only one pass has to be crossed, namely the Barong-la (or Parung), which lies between Targo-gangri and the mighty range on the west of the Shuru-tso.

The short, lofty, meridional range which is called Targo-gangri, and is rather to be considered an isolated massive, ends in the north not far from the lake, the flanks of the last peak descending gently to its flat plain. Nain Sing calls the massive Targot-la Snowy Peaks, and the district to the south of the mountain Tárgot Lhágeb (Largep). The river is marked Targot Sangpo on his map. His Siru Cho to the east of the lake is known to no one here, and his Mun Cho Lakes marked to the south of it actually lie to the west of the lake. His representation of the mountains to the south of the lake is confused and fanciful. Some nomads named the holy mountain Chang-targo-ri.

On the way back I took levels, assisted by Robert, and found that the highest recognizable terrace lay 292 feet above the level of the river. The Targo-tsangpo is here certainly not more than $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet higher than the surface of the lake. As the Dangra-yum-tso is surrounded, particularly on the south, by rather low, flat land, the lake must formerly have been of very large extent. At that time the Targo-gangri skirted the western shore as a peninsula.

In the night there was a noise like an avalanche falling; it became feebler and died away. The horses and yaks of the Tibetans, frightened by something or other, had stormed the detritus slope of the terrace. Half an hour later I heard whistling and shouting; the men were coming back with the runaways.

Before we took leave of our troublesome friends they were photographed on horseback. They all wore roomy, dark cerise-coloured mantles, and, unlike the bare-headed Largep men, a bandage round the head, in many cases drawn through silver rings like bangles. One had a tall white hat like a truncated cone, with a flat brim, a head-covering I remembered seeing in Nakchu. Their guns, with the military pennants on the forks, they had slung over their shoulders, and their sabres stuck out horizontally from their girdles in silver-bound scabbards decorated with three pieces of imitation coral. Over the left shoulder some carried a whole bandolier of *gao* cases with glass fronts, through which were visible the little innocent gods which bring their wearers good fortune on their journey. Their fat little horses stamped and snorted, longing for their old well-known pastures on the shores of the Kyaring-tso. They also were decked with needlessly heavy but dainty ornaments. The white horses with red riders on their backs made a particularly striking picture. It was a varied scene in the blazing sunshine, with the snowy summits of Targo-gangri as a background and Nain Sing's lake to the north. I begged them to greet Hlaje Tsering heartily from me, and tell him that I hoped to see him again.

And then they struck their heels into their horses, drew together into close order, and trotted gaily up to the level surfaces of the river terraces. Captivated by the appearance of the departing troop I ran after it, and watched the dark column grow smaller at the red spur, where the old shore lines seemed to run together. Singular people! They rise like goblins from the depths of their valleys, they come one knows not whence, they, like us, visit for a few short days the foot of the snowy mountain, and then they vanish again like a whirlwind in the dust of the horses' hoofs and beyond the mysterious horizon.

We, too, set out, and I left the Dangra-yum-tso to its fate, the dark-blue waters to the blustering storm and the song of the rising waves, and the eternal snowfields to the whisper of the winds. May the changing colours of the seasons, the

beauty of atmospheric effects of light and shade, gold, purple, and grey, pass over Padma Sambhava's lake amidst rain and sunshine, as already for untold thousands of years, and the steps of believing, yearning pilgrims draw a chain around its shores.

Accompanied by Robert and our aged guide, I rode across the river, which carries about 140 cubic feet of water, and up to a spur of Targo-gangri in order to procure a rock specimen. One glacier tongue after another of the long series on the east side of the mountain passes out of sight, and now the gap disappears through which we had seen a corner of the lake, and far away to the north on its other side the outlines of light-blue mountains.

Six hundred sheep were grazing on a slope without shepherds. Now and then a hare was started in the thick tufts of steppe grass. From the screes on our right was heard the pleasant chirp of partridges. When we were far away two shepherds came up out of a gorge and drove the sheep down to the river. At the lower end of the moraine of a glacier stood a solitary tent. I asked our old man what the spot was called, but he swore by three different gods that he had no notion. The most southern outskirt of Targo-gangri hid the rest of the range, but before we reached camp No. 151 it appeared again foreshortened. This camp stood on the left bank of the river.

May 1. Spring is come; we have, indeed, had as much as 29 degrees of frost during the preceding nights, but the days are fine and clear, and it is never as trying as in the Chang-tang, even riding against the wind. At camp No. 150 we had been at a height of 15,446 feet; now we go slowly down, following the river at first, but leaving it on the left when we see it emerge from the mountains as through a gate. Over a singularly uniform and continuous plain without fissures or undulations we now approach in a south-westerly direction the threshold which separates the Shuru-tso from the Dangra-yum-tso. On the south-west side of Tangro-gangri appear six glaciers, much smaller than those on the north and east, and

rather to be regarded as spurs and corners of the ice mantle which covers the higher regions of the massive. The Shuru-tso is seen as a fine blue line. We approach its shore and find that the lake is completely frozen over. We make a halt to photograph and to draw a panorama. Our old man smokes a pipe, and Robert and Tashi try which can snore loudest. When I am ready we sneak off quietly from the two sleepers. Tashi is the first to awake, understands the joke, and also sneaks off. At last Robert awakes and finds himself alone, but he soon overtakes us on his mule.

Now we have the lake close on our right. To the south rise grand mountains, one of the loftiest chains of the Trans-Himalaya, raven black beneath the sun, but the firn-fields glitter with a metallic lustre. Considerable terraces skirt the bank, and the valleys running down from the east to the lake cut through them, forming hollow ways in which a solitary tent stands here and there guarded by a savage dog. We encamp on the terrace above the Parva valley, our eight black tents contrasting strongly with the yellow soil (15,594 feet). Our old Tibetans from Kyangdam now bid us farewell and receive double payment as a present. In front of us are the congealed waters of the Shuru-tso, longing to be released by the warm spring winds; to the south rises the Do-tsengkan, a mighty elevation clothed in eternal snow; in the south-west the sun sinks behind the huge crest of the mountains and the shadows pass silently across the ice. Soon the evening red lingers only on the peaks of Targo-gangri and Do-tsengkan, and then another night falls over the earth. It is a pity that the Tibetans do not understand the relations of the sun and the planets, for they might regard the solar system as a unique immeasurable prayer-mill revolving in space to the glory of the gods. In the darkness the lofty mountains to the north-west are misty and indistinct, but when the moon rises they and the lake are illuminated alike and seem to be connected. From our terrace we seem to have a bottomless abyss below us.

On May 2 we ride southwards along the shore. Like the Dangra-yum-tso, the Shuru-tso runs almost north and south,

lying in a longitudinal valley which has this direction, so unusual in Tibet. There is open water along the bank, and the waves splash against the edge of the porous ice, on which wild ducks sit, often in long rows. Owing to the swell the water on the bank is black with decayed algæ and rotting water-weeds, in which wild geese cackle and scream. As we come to the regularly curved southern shore of the lake, with its bank of sand, we see the well-known signs of a storm on the plain before us, white dust swirls, stirred up in spirals from the ground by the wind, like the smoke of a shot. After a time we find ourselves in the path of the storm—it will not need many such storms to break up the whole lake and drive its loosened ice-sheets to the eastern bank. We ride across the river Kyangdam-tsangpo, which comes from the Trans-Himalaya, and bivouac on its western terrace (15,548 feet). Here we have the whole lake in front of us to the north, and behind it Targo-gangri, now smaller again.

Here our attendants were changed. The Largep chief, who had been so overbearing at first, was as meek as a lamb at the moment of parting, and gave me a *kadakh*, a sheep, and four skins of butter. Every morning when the caravan sets out Ishe comes to my tent to fetch my two puppies; Muhamed Isa has the third, which he means to train up to be a wonderful animal, and the fourth has been consigned to Sonam Tsering. They have grown a deal already, and howl and bite each other on the march, when they ride in a basket on the back of a mule. They are graceful and playful, and give me great amusement with their tricks.

From the little pass Dunka-śa we had a grand and instructive view over the great Shuru-tso, which is of a somewhat elongated form and is convex to the west. Next day we crossed the pass Ben-la in a south-westerly storm. It raged and blew day and night, but the air remained quite clear. On the 6th we rode up a steep path to the Angden-la. In the rather deep snow and the tiring rubbish the horses can get on only a step at a time, and have often to stop and rest. Tsering rides past us with his yak caravan, and four Ladakis have stayed behind

in the valley suffering from acute headache. At the top of the pass (18,514 feet) stands a huge cairn with strings and streamers, their prayers rising to the dwellings of the gods on the wings of the wind.

No words can describe the panorama around us. We stand above a sea of mountains with here and there a predominant peak. To the south we see the Himalayas clearer and sharper than before, and can perceive where the valley of the Brahmaputra runs on this side of the white ridge. To the north the Shuru-tso is much foreshortened, and the Dangra-yum-tso is hidden by Targo-gangri, which is sharply defined, though we are six days' journey from it. Nay, even the contours of the mighty mountains on the north-east shore of the lake, which we saw in winter from the north, are distinguishable, and they lie fully ten days' journey from here. I sit at the fire, drawing and making observations, as on all the passes. I am again on the Trans-Himalaya, 53 miles from the Chang-la-Pod-la, and now cross it for the third time. Northwards the water drains to the Shuru-tso, southwards to the Raga-tsangpo. My feet stand on the oceanic watershed, my eyes roam over this huge system, which I love as my own possession. For the part where I now stand was unknown and waited millions of years for my coming, lashed by innumerable storms, washed by autumn rains, and wrapped in snow in winter. With every new pass on the watershed of the gigantic rivers of India which I have the good fortune to cross, my desire and hope become ever greater to follow its winding line westwards to regions already known, and to fill up on the map the great white blank north of the Tsangpo. I know very well that generations of explorers will be necessary to examine this mighty intricate mountain land, but my ambition will be satisfied if I succeed in making the first reconnaissance.

We leave the cairn and the fire, its smoke covering the summit of the pass as with a torn veil, and follow the brook, of which the water will some day reach the warm sea after a thousand experiences. I turn a page and begin a new chapter in my life as an explorer; the desolate Chang-tang remains

behind me, and Targo-gangri sinks below the horizon—shall I ever see its majestic peaks again?

We descend rapidly with the wind in our faces. Large blocks of ice fill the valley bottom between walls of black schists and porphyry. Several large side valleys open into ours, and deserted hearths are signs of the visits of nomads in summer. Our valley unites with the large Kyam-chu valley, which is 6 miles broad and descends from the Sha-la, the pass of the Trans-Himalaya over which our Tibetans had wished to guide us. The land round the nomad tents of Kyam is flat and open.

On May 7 we march on in a terrible wind with the blue mirror of the Amchok-tso on the south. The ground is flat and hard. A hare runs like the wind, as if his life were in danger, over this flat, where he cannot find the slightest cover. Eight sprightly antelopes show us their graceful profiles as they spring lightly along, rising from the horizon against a background of sky. Robert has drawn his fur over his head, and sits in the saddle like a lady, with both his legs dangling on the sheltered side, while Tashi leads his mule. But as the wind still blows through him, he lays himself on his stomach across the saddle. My horse sways when the wind catches the broad breast of its rider. The wind howls and moans in my ears, it whines and whistles as it used to do in the Chang-tang, a whole host of indignant spirits of the air seem to complain of all the misery they have seen in the world.

The plain is called Amchok-tang, and we march over it, following the main stream. Amchok-yung is a village of five tents, where are some fine *chanis* bedecked with yak skulls, antelope horns, and slabs of sandstone, one of them, of a regular rectangular form, measuring 40 inches. The inhabitants of the village disappeared as if by magic; only an old man gave us his company as we inspected two of the tents. But when we had ridden on, the people crept out again from behind dung heaps, hillocks, and grass tufts, where they had hidden themselves.

The wind bores thick yellow sand out of the ground into a

spout, which is so dense that it looks black on the shady side. It winds up in cyclonic spirals like the smoke of a tremendous explosion and, like a strange ghost, dances across the plain, and does not fall to pieces till it reaches the foot of the eastern mountains.

In our camp of this day, situated on the north-west shore of the Amchok-tso, we heard Chinese and Tibetan officials spoken of who were shortly to ride through the country in all directions, counting the tents, people, and herds. It was thought that this inspection was connected with the new taxation which the Chinese intend to introduce.

My boat lay ready on the strand, for May 8 was to be devoted to an excursion on the Amchok-tso.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

TO THE OUTLET OF THE CHAKTAK-TSANGPO IN THE BRAHMAPUTRA

THE lake was free from ice, and only on the northern shore some blocks rocked on the surf. A south-west wind swept constantly over the country, and there was no prospect of good weather. A dozen Tibetans followed me at a respectful distance. I begged them to come nearer and see us start. The boat was brought down to the water, Rehim Ali and Shukkur took their places, and Lama carried me to the boat through the slowly deepening water. A promontory to the south, 34° E., was fixed as our goal, and the oarsmen began their struggle with the waves. For the first hour the lake was so shallow that the oars struck the bottom and stirred up inky-black mud. Shukkur cries out in time with the oars, "Shubasa, ya aferin, bismillah, ya barkadiallah"—to cite only a few words of his inexhaustible repertoire. Rehim Ali's oar gives me a splash as it dips in, but I am soon dry again in the wind. The swell stirs up the mud from the bottom, and the water is so shallow that the waves show a tendency to break even out in the middle of the lake.

Now the sandspouts begin their threatening dance on the western shore, and in that direction the water gleams white. The storm sweeps over the Amchok-tso, and the two Mohammedans must put forth all their strength to force the boat forward against wind and water. The swell grows heavier, the depth is 7.9 feet, and the water assumes a greener hue. Shukkur Ali, our old fisherman, put out his line, but nothing

but floating algæ will bite. In several places are seen wild ducks, gulls, and wild geese. Nomads have just arrived and are putting up their tents in a gorge on the eastern shore. At length we reach the promontory, having sounded a maximum depth of only 12 feet.

After observations have been taken, a panorama sketched, and dinner eaten, we again set off in a northerly direction, and the boat dances before the brisk wind lightly as a wild duck over the waves. We sail past three more tents, sound 10.2 feet, and approach the northern shore, where the water is only 20 inches deep, and is a muddy soup. We run aground at a distance of 100 yards from the bank. Rabsang comes up running, leading my horse by the bridle, and some other Ladakis follow him. They help us to land, and light a much-needed fire at the foot of the sand terrace which here rises from the bank.

The river Kyam-chu enters the Amchok-tso on the north side, and only 1¼ miles to the west of its muddy delta the Dongmo-chu flows out of the lake towards its confluence with the Raga-tsangpo in the east. Properly speaking, the Dongmo is only the continuation of the Kyam-chu, with the lake hanging like a bag on its right bank.

After the boat has been folded up, Muhamed Isa has to show us the way on horseback over the grass-grown sandhills. He guides me across the twenty shallow and treacherously swampy delta arms of the Kyam-chu. It is dark, but a beacon fire has been lighted in the camp, and the cakes of dung are heated to whiteness in the strong wind, and shine like electric light.

Next day I was up before the sun, in order to take an observation. The thermometer had sunk in the night to 0.3°, and the wind blew regularly as a trade-wind. It is pleasant to see the day dawn in the east, and life begin anew among the tents. The hired yaks have lain tethered during the night, and now they are allowed to wander freely over the pasture. Sleepy yawns are heard in the tents, and men come out and make up the fires; the jug bubbles in which the morning tea

is stirred up with butter, and kettles are set on three stones over the fire. The puppies play in the open, and are glad that they have not to roll about to-day in a basket.

The days and months fly by to a chorus of storms, and spring still delays its coming. In the evening songs of the Ladakis I fancy I hear an undertone of home-sickness, and they rejoice at every day's march which brings us a little further westwards. When we woke next morning, it blew as fresh as ever, and Robert had made himself a mask with Tibetan spectacles sewed into the eye-holes; he looked very comical in this contrivance, which was very appropriate in this land of religious masquerades.

The road, ascending the broad valley of the Pu-chu, led over open, slightly undulating ground to Serme-lartsa. Here old Guffaru was reported sick; he suffered from colic, and was well nursed. But late at night Robert came breathless to my tent to tell me the old man was dying. When I came to the tent the son, whose duty it was to keep the shroud ready, sat weeping beside his father, while the other men warmed their caps over the fire and applied them to the body of the patient. I ordered him a cold compress, but he asked me, to the intense amusement of others, just to go back to my tent again. Muhamed Isa laughed till he rolled over; Guffaru sat upright on his bed, moaned and groaned, and begged me to go away. I gave him a strong dose of opium, and next morning he was so brisk that he walked all the way, though a horse was at his disposal. The remains of Burroughs and Wellcome's medicine chest had saved his life; he was thankful and pleased that his shroud was not required this time.

On May 11 we mounted to the pass Lungring (17,697 feet) in a bitterly cold snowstorm, and descended the valley of the same name to the bank of the upper Raga-tsangpo. On the 12th we marched upstream; the valley is broad, and is bounded on the north by great mountains. The thermometer had sunk to $-0.8°$, and the storm was dead against us. Occasionally it abated so much that we could hear the footfalls of the horses on the detritus, but we were benumbed when we came to the

camp. Thick snow fell all the afternoon. My puppies sat together in the tent door and growled at the falling flakes, but when they saw it was no use, they snapped at the flakes as though they were flies and pawed at them. Then they went back into the tent, lay on the frieze blanket in the corner, and let it snow on.

On the next day's march we passed Kamba-sumdo, where the two head sources of the Raga-tsangpo unite; the one, coming from the west, is named Chang-shung, the other, from the south-west, Lo-shung, *i.e.* "Northern" and "Southern Valley." The Chang-shung is the larger. The Lo-shung we had to cross twice, and found the bed full of stones connected by slippery ice. In the west a large snow-covered ridge appeared, the Chomo-uchong, or "High Nun," which was discovered by Nain Sing. Ryder measured it and produced an exact map of it. Belts of snow descend from the white summits down the dark flanks. Other Tibetans called it Chōōr-jong.

Still marching south-westwards we approached at an acute angle the great main road between Lhasa and Ladak, the so-called *tasam*. As though to show its importance a caravan was just at the time travelling westwards in three columns. It moved so slowly through the landscape that we had to watch the mountain spur behind to convince ourselves that the small black lines were moving at all. Soon afterwards we pitched our tents in Raga-tasam (16,234 feet), a station on the great high-road, where we came in contact with the route of the English expedition under Ryder and Rawling for the first time since leaving Shigatse. Whatever the immediate future had in store for me, it was above all things my desire to avoid this route as much as possible. For the map which Ryder and Wood had executed is the best that has been surveyed of any part of Tibet; I could add nothing new to it with my modest equipment. But if I passed to the north or south of their line of march, I could supplement their map with my own explorations. In this I actually so far succeeded that out of eighty-three days' marches to Tokchen on the Manasarowar only two-and-a-half days' march ran along their route.

As I now perceived that we should have to travel on the road which Nain Sing in the year 1865, and Ryder and Rawling and their comrades in 1904, had passed along, I wrote, after consultation with Robert and Muhamed Isa, to Tang Darin and Lien Darin in Lhasa. I represented in an urgent appeal to the former, the High Commissioner, that it could not clash with any treaty if I, being already in Tibet, travelled to Ladak by one road or another, provided that I actually did go thither, and that I therefore begged permission to take the following route: I wished to take my homeward way past the lake Tede-nam-tso, of which Nain Sing had heard, then to visit the Dangra-yum-tso, and thence to proceed to Tradum and to the Ghalaring-tso, the holy mountain Kailas, the Manasarowar lake, the sources of the Indus and the Brahmaputra, and lastly Gartok. To the other, the Amban of Lhasa, I also wrote about the way I desired to take, and promised to send him a report about it from Gartok. I told both that I wished for a speedy answer, and would wait for it in Raga-tasam.

As soon as I had come to a decision, I called Tundup Sonam and Tashi, and told them to get their sleep over by midnight. Then I wrote the above-mentioned letters and letters to my parents and to Major O'Connor. When my correspondence was ready, it was past midnight. The camp had lain several hours in sleep when I made the night watchman waken the two messengers and Muhamed Isa. Their orders were such as they had never received before. They were to travel day and night along the 220 miles to Shigatse and hand over my letters to Ma. They need not wait for an answer, for I had asked the Mandarins to send me special couriers. Provisions they need not take, for they would be able to get everything on the great high-road, and I gave them money to hire the horses they required. They would be able to reach their journey's end in ten days, and in a month we ought to have an answer. If they did not find us in Raga-tasam on their return, they were to follow in our track.

Tundup Sonam and Tashi were in good spirits and full of

hope when Muhamed Isa and I accompanied them outside the camp, and watched them disappear into the dark night. They made a detour to avoid the twelve black tents standing here, lest the numerous dogs of the village should bark. It was not far to the great high-road, and at the next *tasam*, as the stations are called, they could hire horses at daybreak. Muhamed Isa and I sat a while in my tent in lively conversation about our prospects. Not till I had crept into bed after a tiring day did it occur to me that it was perhaps cruel to let the two men ride alone day and night through Tibet. But it was too late, they must now fulfil their mission.

There was no hurry now. We stayed here seven days. Westwards the way was open, but not the way I wished to take, and therefore we were prisoners in our own tents. "Patience," whispered the ceaseless winds. The unknown land lay to the north; I could not give it up till all my efforts had proved fruitless. We had cold unpleasant weather, with frequently more than 36 degrees of frost, and on the night of May 15 as much as 46.4 degrees. The Tibetans said that this neighbourhood is always cold, even when spring reigns all around.

I lay on my bed and read *David Copperfield*, *Dombey and Son*, and *The Newcomes*, for I had now a whole library to read through, the gift of the obliging Major O'Connor. Robert gave me lessons in Hindustani, and I drew types of the people. A puppy of the same age as our own warily came up to my tent and got a breakfast. Mamma Puppy was by no means pleased with this wayside guest, who looked comical, as shy and quiet as a mouse; he sat by the hour together at the fire and looked at me, at length falling asleep and turning on his side. When he appeared again at dinner, he was thoroughly worried by Puppy, but nevertheless went calmly to the family mat and laid himself down. Puppy was furious, but so dumbfoundered at this unexpected impudence that she laid herself down on the ground beside the mat.

Tibetans came every day to my tent and implored us to make a start. When this proved useless, they declared at

length, that they could no longer supply us with provisions, for no more were to be had in the neighbourhood. I asked them, as an experiment, whether they would forward two letters to the Mandarins in Lhasa, but they replied that they had no authority to do this. They were much astonished when they heard that I had sent off letters five days previously. For two days I lay in bed, for I was quite at an end of my strength, and made Robert read to me.

On Whitsunday, May 19, we had another long palaver. The Tibetans read to me the instructions they had received from Lhasa, which were dated "on the tenth day of the second month in the year of the fiery sheep." I was there called Hedin Sahib, and the orders contained the following clauses: "Send him out of the country. Let him not turn aside from the *tasam*, and guide him neither to the right nor to the left. Supply him with horses, yaks, servants, fuel, grass, and everything he wants. The prices he must pay are the usual prices fixed by the Government. Give him at once anything he asks for and refuse him nothing. But if he will not conform to the directions on his passport, but says he will take other routes independently, give him no provisions, but keep firm hold of him and send off messengers at once to the Devashung. Do not venture to think for yourselves, but obey. Any one in the provinces who does not obey will be beaten; so run the regulations you have to conform to. If he gives no trouble, see that the nomads serve him well and do him no harm on the way to Gartok. Then it will be the business of the Garpuns (the two Viceroys) to take him under their protection."

And yet I was not satisfied. I told them that I could not think of conforming to my passport, which was contrary to my religion, and that I must go northwards from the Chomo-uchong to Saka-dzong. They were quite at liberty to send messengers to the Devashung. We would wait. Then they held a council, and at length agreed to let us take the northern route, but we must set out on May 21.

I lay on my bed and dreamed of the tramp of horses coming both from the east and the west, of the roads open to

me to the mysterious mountain system in the north, round which my plans and my dreams circled continually like young eagles.

So we set out on May 21, north-westwards, and saw the summits of the Chomo-uchong disappear behind its outskirts. From the camp we could see several valleys in the north-west drained by the source streams of the Raga-tsangpo. Just beyond Raga-tasam we again left the route of the English expedition, and on the 22nd climbed up to the pass Ravak-la, which lies on a low ridge between two of the source streams of the Raga-tsangpo. On the 23rd we crossed four passes. The Kichung-la is the watershed between the Raga-loshung and the Chungsang, a river which takes an independent course to the Tsangpo. The ascent to the fourth pass, the Kanglung-la, was very tiresome, the ground consisting of wet alluvium, wherein the horses sank so deep that we preferred to go on foot and splash through the mud. We were now on the heights whence the water flows down to three of the northern tributaries of the Brahmaputra; the third flows to the Chaktak-tsangpo, which runs to the west of Saka-dzong. Here and there the snow, owing to wind, melting and freezing again, has assumed the form of upright blades, two feet high and sharp as a knife. Far to the south appear parts of the Himalayas, and we are here in a grand landscape of wild and fantastic relief. Now and then the view is obscured by dense showers of hail.

On the morning of the 24th all the country was hidden by thickly falling snow, and the weather at the end of May was more winterly than on the Chang-tang in December. We ride between steep cliffs down a deeply eroded valley, and side valleys run in with narrow deep openings. In one of them is a frozen waterfall. We often cross the clear water of the river which rushes along on its way to Saka-dzong and the Chaktak-tsangpo. Violent gusts of snow sweep through the valley from time to time, and then we can hardly see our hands, and the ground and the mountains become white. In the beautiful junction of valleys called Pangsetak our tents and those of the Tibetans were heavily weighted with snow.

On the 25th we go down further. Nomad tents are as rare as on the preceding days, for people come here only in summer. The path runs frequently up along the left terrace, high above the valley bottom, where the river has formed two large basins of dark-green water. We amused ourselves with rolling stones down the steep slope; they knocked against other boulders, dashed with a thundering noise into the valley, tearing up sand and dust, bounced up from the ground, and finally plunged into the basin, raising a cloud of spray. It was childish but very diverting. The valley passes into a plain, in the southern part of which runs the great high-road between Raga-tasam and Saka-dzong. The river we had followed down is the Kanglung-bupchu, but in Saka it is called Sachu-tsangpo. We pitched our camp in the mouth of the valley Basang on the north side of the plain.

From here to Saka-dzong is a short day's journey. But, instead of travelling along this road, which Ryder has already laid down on his map, I wished to see the place where the Chaktak-tsangpo unites with the upper Brahmaputra. That would involve a long detour of four days' journey, and to this our friends from Raga would not consent without the permission of the Governor of Saka. We therefore stayed a day in the Basang valley, while a messenger was sent to him. When the answer came it was, to our surprise, in the affirmative, but under the condition that the main part of the caravan should proceed straight to Saka-dzong. I even received a local passport for the excursion.

Among other natives who at this time sat for me as models was a youth of twenty years, named Ugyu, who had lived some years before with his mother and sisters in a valley to the north, where their tent was attacked and pillaged by robbers. They had defended themselves bravely with sabres and knives, but the robber band had had firearms, and Ugyu had been struck by a bullet, which had passed through his shoulder-blade and lung, and had come out at his breast. Large scars showed the course of the bullet. When one remembers that the leaden bullets of the Tibetans are as large as hazel-nuts,

one is astonished that the boy did not die of internal hæmorrhage. He appeared, on the contrary, extraordinarily healthy and blooming, and had an amiable, sympathetic disposition.

I sat on a barley sack before Muhamed Isa's tent and sketched. Meanwhile, the baggage and provisions were made ready for the excursion. My excellent caravan leader stood, tall and straight as a pole, watching the others filling the sacks we were to take with us. He had the boat also and everything we wanted for river measurements packed up. In the evening he arranged a farewell ball for Tsering, Shukkur Ali, Rabsang, Islam Ahun, and Ishe, who were to accompany Robert and me to the Tsangpo. He had bought in Shigatse a large fine guitar, on which he played himself in his tent. This evening the dancing and singing went off more gaily and merrily than ever. We expected good news from Lhasa, and were glad that the people in Saka had granted the permission I had asked for.

On the morning of May 27 the weather was really fine after a minimum of only 23°; had the spring come at last? The main caravan had already gone off westwards to Saka, and my party was ready when Muhamed Isa came to say farewell. He was ordered to remain in Saka till I returned, and to try by all means to gain the confidence of the officials by friendliness and prudent conduct. My small caravan was on the road to the south, and we stood alone on the deserted camping-ground. After he had received his instructions we mounted into our saddles at the same time and I rode after my men. I turned once more in the saddle and saw Muhamed Isa's stately form upright on his grey horse, his pipe in his mouth, his green velvet cap on his head, and the black sheepskin loose on his shoulder, trotting quickly in the track of the caravan. It was the last time I saw him thus.

Soon we cross the great high-road, the *tasam*, and ride slowly up to the pass Gyebuk-la (15,846 feet) marked by four *manis*, which are covered with green flags of schist with incised Buddha images. The well-worn path, and three caravans of yaks which are just coming over the pass on the way to Saka-dzong, show

us that this is an important trade route. Two of the caravans came from the great town Tsongka-dzong, which lies five days' journey southwards, not far from the frontier of Nepal. From Saka the caravans go over the Gyebuk-la, cross the Brahmaputra, ascend the Samderling valley, and by the Sukpu-la and Negu-la passes reach Tsongka-dzong, which supplies the nomads living in the north with barley. From Gyebuk-la there is a grand view over the sharp peaks and the glacier tongues of the Chomo-uchong. On the southern slopes of the pass there are *pama* bushes almost everywhere, and it is pleasant to see their fresh green needles again.

The road runs down the Kyerkye valley. On a smooth wall of rock "Om mani padme hum" is hewn in characters a yard high. At camp No. 167 the Tibetans of the neighbourhood came kindly to meet me and bid me welcome, and two of them led my horse by the bridle to my tent, as is the custom in this country.

Next day we march down the valley with fresh guides, and see several ruins telling of happier times now gone by. Terraced structures for irrigating the fields indicate that barley is grown in the district. In front of us is now the broad valley of the Brahmaputra, and we come to an arm of the river where a ferry is established to transport caravans and goods on the way between Tsongka-dzong and Saka-dzong from one side of the river to the other.

Camp No. 168 was pitched at the extremity of the tongue of gravel between the two rivers. The Chaktak-tsangpo had here a breadth of 92.2 feet, a maximum depth of 2.4 feet, an average velocity of 4.56 feet, and a discharge of 664 cubic feet per second. Its water was almost quite clear, and in consequence of its greater velocity forced its way far into the muddy water of the Brahmaputra. The latter had at mid-day a temperature of 48.9°, while the water of the tributary was a little warmer, namely, 49.8°. Our companions told us that all who come to the great river drink of the water, because it comes from the holy mountain Kailas, or Kang-rinpoche, in the far west.

Shukkur Ali sat with his ground line at a deep bay with slow eddies and pulled out of the water ten fine fish, a species of sheat with four soft barbs. He had raw meat as bait on his five hooks; at one end of the line a stone was tied, so that it could be thrown far out into deep water, and the other end was made fast to a peg driven into the bank, and a stone was laid on the line so lightly in the fork of the peg that it fell when a fish bit. The fisherman can then occupy himself meanwhile with some manual work, such as mending shoes. He puts his fish in a small enclosed basin. The fish had white flesh, and were delicate.

On May 29 we measured the main river at a place where a low island divides it into two channels 175.5 and 180.4 feet broad respectively, with a maximum depth of 3.8 feet. Here the Brahmaputra carries 2532 cubic feet of water, and 3196 after receiving the Chaktak-tsangpo. At the confluence of the Dok-chu we had found only 2966 cubic feet, but the measurement was made a month and a half earlier. The ratio of the Brahmaputra to the Dok-chu was 5 : 2, and of the Brahmaputra to the Chaktak-tsangpo 7 : 2. The Dok-chu is therefore considerably larger than the Chaktak-tsangpo.

On May 30 we followed the broad valley of the Chaktak-tsangpo towards the north-west and west-north-west till we came to a district named Takbur, whence we intended to ride next day over the Takbur-la to Saka-dzong. But it did not come off; for before I was awakened came a chief with five attendants and made a horrible disturbance with my men and our Tibetans from Kyerkye. The latter he beat with the flat of his sword, and he took away from the former the milk and butter they had bought the evening before, saying that no one had permission to sell us provisions. He told Robert that he had orders not to let us pass through to Saka-dzong, and that he would make us stay here three months. We might not hire yaks also—which was very inconvenient, as we had only a horse and a mule after all the hired animals had gone. We might not buy provisions; but this was not of much consequence, for

Robert had shot four wild geese and found a large quantity of eggs, and the river was full of fish.

I accordingly sent Islam Ahun and Ishe to Saka with a message that Muhamed Isa should send us five horses immediately. Then I summoned the supercilious chief to my tent, where he confirmed the accounts of my men. He declared that I had no right to deviate a single step from the great high-road, and that the district in which we were was under him, not under Saka-dzong, and therefore the local passport was worthless. He intended to carry out the orders he had received, as he valued his head. When I told him that I should report his uncivil behaviour to the Mandarins in Lhasa, he jumped up and drew his sword threateningly, but when he saw that my composure could not be shaken he quieted down. In the evening he came to tell us that we might cross the Takbur-la, and brought us both yaks and provisions. Who he was we could never discover, for in Saka no one would acknowledge that he knew him. Perhaps it was only a childish attempt to cure me of further deviations from the main road. However, it was a pity that we had lost a day here. When the morning of June 1 dawned, Islam Ahun and Ishe came with our horses, which we did not now need, and brought me greetings from Muhamed Isa, who sent word that all was well with the caravan; they were on friendly terms with the authorities, and were permitted to buy all they required.

We set off again northwards and marched through the Takbur valley, where there was abundance of game—hares, pheasants, and partridges—some of which Tsering shot, and foxes, marmots, and field-mice. In the distance we saw a grey prowling animal which we took for a lynx. There were also kiangs, which seemed very unconcerned. North-west, north, and north-east huge snowy mountains were seen from the Takbur-la (16,621 feet), of which Ryder and Wood had taken bearings. Like those Englishmen, I considered it certain that these peaks lay on the watershed of the Tsangpo, and belonged to the crest of the Trans-Himalaya. I had afterwards an opportunity of proving that this was a mistake. From the pass

a river runs down to join the Sachu-tsangpo. Here we saw a number of yaks in the luxuriant grass, and a nearly tame kulan kept them company.

Where the river emerges into the Saka plain, we passed on its left side over a last small spur of the mountain on which the pass is situated, and here I rested for an hour with Robert, to draw a panorama of the interesting country. Tsering marched on with his men, and disappeared as a speck on the great plain. To the east-north-east the white houses of Saka-dzong could be seen in the distance, and with the glass we could make out the camp, two black tents and a white, the latter Muhamed Isa's.

Then we too passed across the plain. On the left stood four tents, where the sheep were being driven into the fold for the night. At one place the road divides; travellers who have nothing to do in Saka-dzong take the southern road. We cross the Sa-chu river and the overflow of a spring; there is a strong wind from the west, and we long for the tents and the warmth of the camp-fires. At last we are there. Guffaru comes to greet us, and all the others call out to us "Salaam!" and "Ju!" I look in vain for Muhamed Isa's stalwart figure, and inquire for him. "He is lying in bed and has been ill all day," they answer. I suppose that he has his usual headache again, go to the brazier in my tent, and let Robert, as usual, unpack the things I require for my evening work. We were tired and chilled through and longed for our supper.

CHAPTER XXXIX

MUHAMED ISA'S DEATH

WE had not been sitting long when Rabsang came to say that Muhamed Isa had lost consciousness, and did not answer when he was spoken to. I now perceived that he had had an apoplectic fit, and hurried off with Robert to his tent, which stood close beside mine. An oil lamp was burning beside the head of his bed, where his brother Tsering sat weeping. The sick man lay on his back, tall, strong, and straight. The mouth was a little drawn on the left side, and the pupil of the left eye seemed very small, while that of the right eye was normal. The pulse was regular and strong, beating 72. I at once ordered hot bottles to be laid at his feet, and a bag of ice on his head. His clothes were loosened; he breathed deeply and regularly. The eyes were half open, but were lustreless. I called his name loudly, but he gave little sign; he tried to turn his head and move his right arm, uttered a low groan, and then remained still again. Robert was shocked when I told him that Muhamed Isa would not see the sun rise again.

While we were sitting beside his bed I inquired the circumstances from Rehim Ali and Guffaru, who had been with him all day long. During the four days they had waited for us here, he had been quite well, and had never complained of headache. He had tried, in accordance with the last instructions I had given him at the camp in the Basang valley, to win the friendship and confidence of the authorities. The day before he had been still in excellent spirits, had drunk tea with his most intimate friends in the caravan, and had sung to the accompaniment of the guitar.

On this day, June 1, he had got up with the sun, drunk tea, and had had a stormy interview with two Tibetans from the dzong. They had refused to supply the caravan with provisions, and then insisted that the caravan should leave the place at once. He had answered that the Sahib would soon be back, and that it would go badly with them if they did not obey him. They had gone away in anger, and then Muhamed Isa had breakfasted about ten o'clock, and had slept an hour. When he rose, he had complained of headache.

When the sun had reached its noonday height he had gone to look out for us, and had then had a violent attack of sickness, fallen on his left side and lain senseless. The other men hurried up, carried him to his tent, and massaged his body. He was restored thereby to consciousness, and spoke much but indistinctly, and chiefly with the god of Islam:

"I was a Lamaist but went over to Islam; help me now, O Allah, out of this severe illness; let me recover; forgive me my sins and all the wrong I have done to others; let me live, O Allah, and I will always keep thy commandments and will never omit my prayers."

Then he had admonished the others to do their duty as heretofore, and thanked them that they had so patiently assisted him in his misfortune. Now and then he had asked for cold water. He had felt his left arm with his right hand, and asked whose arm it was, and had also said that he did not feel the shoe on his left foot. The whole left side was quite paralysed. Sitting upright, and supported by cushions, he had made the following request to Guffaru: "Thou, who art old, and keepest the commandments of religion, wilt not pollute thy hands if thou takest a knife and cuttest my neck; cut deep down to the spine, for that will relieve my infernal headache." In his fearful suffering he struck his right hand against a box. About an hour later another stroke deprived him of speech, and after that he had only made a sign with his right hand, as though in despair at the approach of death. Towards four o'clock Tsering had come and thrown himself over him, weeping loudly. Muhamed Isa had also wept, and pointed to

his lips to intimate that he could not speak. When we entered his tent about five o'clock his consciousness was almost gone. He remained in the same condition for an hour and a half, breathing quietly, with his mouth closed. I went therefore to my dinner, which Adul had prepared for me.

Robert and I studied Burroughs and Wellcome's medical handbook, to see that nothing had been omitted. About eight o'clock we returned to the sick-bed. Muhamed Isa was now breathing with his mouth open—a bad sign, showing that the muscles of the jaws were relaxed; the pulse beat 108, and was very weak. The despair of old Tsering when I told him all hope was gone, was heart-rending. Half an hour later the breathing became slower and weaker, and about nine o'clock the death-rattle commenced, and the struggle of the muscles of the chest to supply the lungs with sufficient air. About every fortieth respiration was deep, and then there was a pause before the next came. They were followed by moans. His feet grew cold in spite of the hot bottles, which were frequently changed. At a quarter-past nine the breathing became still slower and the intervals longer. A death spasm shook his body and slightly raised his shoulders; it was followed by another.

The Mohammedans whispered to Tsering that he should leave his place at the head, for a Mohammedan must hold the lower jaw and close the mouth after the last breath. But the sorrowing brother could only be brought to leave his place by force. A third and last spasm shook the dying man, produced by the cold of death. After a deep respiration he lay still for 20 seconds. We thought that life had flown, but he breathed again, and after another minute came the last feeble breath, and then old Guffaru bound a cloth under the chin and covered the face with a white kerchief. Then all was still, and, deeply moved, I bared my head before the awful majesty of Death.

Horrified and dismayed, the Mohammedans poured into the tent, and the Lamaists after them, and I heard them from time to time call out in low tones, "La illaha il Allah!" Tsering was beside himself: he knelt by the dead, beat his forehead with his hands, wept aloud, nay, howled and bellowed,

while large tears rolled down his furrowed sunburnt face. I patted him on the shoulder, and begged him to try and compose himself, go into his tent, drink tea, and lie down and rest. But he neither heard nor saw, and the others had to carry him to his tent, and I heard him wailing in the night as long as I lay awake. Yes, Death is an awful guest. We could hardly realize that he had so suddenly entered our peaceful camp.

I had a long conversation with Robert in my tent, and old Guffaru was sent for to receive my orders for the funeral. The Mohammedans were to watch in turn beside the body through the night. Early next morning the permission of the authorities would be obtained for the choice of a burying-place, and then the interment would take place.

At midnight I paid a last visit to my excellent, faithful caravan leader, who had fallen at his post in the prime of life. He lay long and straight, swathed in a shroud and a frieze rug, in the middle of his tent. At his head burned his oil-lamp, slightly flickering in the draught. The dead watch of five men sat mute and motionless, but rose when I entered. We uncovered his face; it was calm and dignified, and a slight smile played round the lips; the colour was pale, but slightly bronzed from the effect of wind and sun. Arched over him was the half-dark bell of the tent—the tent which had fluttered in all the winds of heaven on the way through the Chang-tang, and from which Muhamed Isa's merry jests had so often been heard in quiet cold Tibetan nights amidst the sound of flutes and guitars. Now depressing silence reigned around; only the stars sparkled with electric brilliancy.

How empty and dreary everything seemed when I woke on Sunday, June 2, the day of Muhamed Isa's funeral! I went out and looked at the grave; it lay about 300 yards to the south-west of the camp. The Mohammedans had been early in the village to borrow a door, and had washed the body on it. Then they had wrapped it in Guffaru's shroud, which was of thin linen, but quite white and clean. Muhamed Isa and I had often laughed together over the old man's

singular fancy of taking this death garment on the journey. Over the shroud (*kafan*) they had wrapped a grey frieze rug. The body lay now in the bright sunshine before the tent, on a bier consisting of the bottom of the two halves of the boat fastened together, and provided with four cross-poles for the bearers.

When all was ready the eight Mohammedans raised the bier on to their shoulders, and carried their chieftain and leader, royally tall, straight and cold, to his last resting-place. I walked immediately behind the bier, and then came Robert and some Lamaists; the rest were occupied at the grave, and only two remained in the camp, which could not be left unguarded. From Tsering's tent a despairing wailing could still be heard. He had been persuaded not to come to the grave. He was heart and soul a Lamaist, and now he was troubled at the thought that he would never see his brother again, who had looked forward to the paradise of the Mohammedans. Some Tibetans stood at a distance. Slowly, solemnly, and mournfully the procession set itself in motion. No ringing of bells, no strewn fir branches, no chants spoke of an awakening beyond the valley of the shadow of death. But above us the turquoise-blue sky stretched its vault, and around us the lofty, desolate mountains held watch. In deep mournful voice the bearers sang, "La illaha il Allah," in time with their heavy steps. They staggered under their burden, and had to change it frequently to the other shoulder, for Muhamed Isa was big, corpulent, and heavy.

At length we ascended a gravel terrace between two source streams. The bier was placed at the edge of the grave, which was not quite ready. It was deep, lay north and south, and had a cutting or niche on the left side, under which the body was to be laid, so that the earth might not press on it when the grave was filled in. Four men stood in the grave and received the body, and placed it, wrapped only in the white shroud, under the arch, arranging it so that the face was turned towards Mecca, where the hopes of all true believing pilgrims are centred.

Scarcely was all set in order when a painful incident occurred, an evil omen: the overhanging vault of loose, dry gravel fell in, burying the corpse completely, and partly covering the four men. There was silence, and the men looked at one another irresolute. Shukkur Ali broke the oppressive silence, jumped into the grave, out of which the others clambered, dug out the body again, and removed the gravel from the shroud as well as he could. A wall was then erected of sods cut from the bank of the brook so as to protect the body, the outer space was filled in with sand and stones, and finally a mound a yard high was thrown up over the grave, two stone slabs being placed at the head and foot.

When all was done the Lamaists went home, but the Mohammedans remained at the grave to pray for the deceased, sometimes kneeling, sometimes standing up with their palms before their face. Shukkur Ali, who had been Muhamed Isa's old friend and comrade on many of his journeys in Asia, broke out into violent weeping and wailing, but the others mourned more quietly. Finally, I said a few words in Turki. During all my journeys I had never had a more efficient, experienced, and faithful caravan leader; he had maintained discipline in the caravan, been a father to the men, and taken the best care of the animals; he had been an excellent interpreter, and had treated the natives with prudence and tact. By his happy, humorous disposition he had kept all the others in good temper. In difficult situations he had always found the right way out. In unknown country he had climbed passes and summits to look for the best route—he had always gone himself and not sent others. His memory would always be cherished and honoured among us, and he had also earned a great name in the exploration of Asia, for during thirty years he had served many other Sahibs as faithfully and honestly as myself.

We went silently home after our day's work.

In the lectionary of this Sunday occurred the Bible text, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Muhamed Isa had travelled far, and was highly respected

in Asia. He had been in Saka-dzong before, in the year 1904, as Rawling and Ryder's caravan leader. He little thought then that he would return once more, and here set up his tent for the last time after his long wanderings. In the *Geographical Journal* of April 1909, p. 422, Rawling refers to him as follows:—

> Having mentioned Saka Dzong, let me break off one moment to pay a token of respect to the memory of that faithful servant of Sven Hedin who died here. Mohamed Isa was one of the finest characters it has been my fortune to be thrown with. Trustworthy and indomitable in his work, his knowledge of Asia was unequalled by any native, for he had accompanied Younghusband in his famous journey from China, he was with Carey, with Dalgleish who was afterwards murdered, and with Dutreuil de Rhins, when he was a helpless witness of his master's violent death at the hands of the Tibetans. He acted as my caravan bashi in the Gartok expedition, accompanied Sven Hedin during his recent journey, and died, after thirty years of faithful service, at this desolate spot.

From letters I subsequently received from Younghusband, O'Connor, and Ryder, I learned that they also deeply mourned his loss.

The grave terrace rose close to the great high-road between Ladak and Lhasa on its northern side. The mound was next day covered with cut sods arranged in steps, and a small flagstone was set in the ground at the head of the grave, whereon passing Mohammedans could spread out a carpet and pray for the repose of the deceased. On a slab of slate, smoothed down with a chisel, I scratched the following inscription in English and in Roman letters:—

MUHAMED ISA
CARAVAN LEADER UNDER
CAREY, DALGLEISH, DE RHINS, YOUNGHUSBAND
RAWLING, RYDER AND OTHERS
DIED
IN THE SERVICE OF SVEN HEDIN
AT SAKA-DZONG, ON JUNE 1, 1907
AT THE AGE OF 53 YEARS.

The writing was then cut in the stone by Islam Ahun. The name was also engraved in Arabic, and at the top the formula, "Om mani padme hum," in Tibetan characters, that the people of the country might respect the grave. Future travellers will find the stone in its place—if the Tibetans have not taken it away.

In the afternoon of June 3 I sent for Tsering to my tent. He was now calm and resigned. He was to be my cook and body-servant as before, but his pay would be raised to 20 rupees a month, and this rise was to date back to our departure from Leh. He was allowed to keep the watch I had given to his brother. Guffaru, the oldest of the men, was Muhamed Isa's successor as caravan bashi, received the same increase of pay as Tsering, and was allowed to use Muhamed Isa's grey horse and saddle. In future he would live with two other men in the tent of the deceased.

As I foresaw that the discipline would not be what it was in Muhamed Isa's time, I spoke seriously to the men, telling them that they must obey Guffaru as blindly as they had his predecessor, that they ought to hold together as before and continue to serve me faithfully. If any one began to quarrel and was disobedient, he would at once be handed the pay due to him and be sent off to go where he liked. Now that we travelled with hired yaks I could very well spare half the men, and therefore it was their interest to conduct themselves so that they might be retained. Rabsang and Namgyal answered in the name of all, that they would hold together, serve me faithfully, and follow me anywhere.

Then Robert was commissioned to look through the property of the deceased in the presence of Tsering, Guffaru, Shukkur Ali, Rehim Ali, and the Hajji, and after he had made an inventory, to pack it in separate boxes, which were ultimately to be delivered to his wife in Leh together with his outstanding pay. Among his things were some articles of value which he had bought in Shigatse—carpets, tea-cups with metal saucers and covers, ornaments, and woven materials. He had left behind only 10 rupees in ready money, a proof

that he had been thoroughly honest in his management of the business of the caravan.

After all relating to the interment had been carried out, the Mohammedans came to ask for a few rupees to enable them to hold a memorial feast in the evening in honour of the deceased. They would make a pudding, called *halva*, of flour, butter, and sugar, drink tea, and kill a sheep. The heathen also, as the Mohammedans called their Lamaist comrades, were to be present. They sang, ate, and drank, and probably hardly thought of the departed.

Two gentlemen from the dzong had been with me on June 2. The Governor himself was absent, travelling in his province to number the tents under his administration and to draw up a list of all the inhabited valleys—all by order of the Chinese. Pemba Tsering, the second in command, was very agreeable and polite, but regretted that he could not supply us with provisions any longer, as he must be prepared to furnish necessaries to the men who were constantly passing to and fro between Gartok and Lhasa. To confirm his words he called up the five Govas or district inspectors of the country, who declared that the poor country could not supply all the *tsamba* and barley we required. I intimated to them that we should still remain a few days awaiting the answer from Lhasa; then they rose, protesting that I might stay here as long as I liked, but that they would not provide me with provisions.

On the same day a large white-and-blue tent was set up by our camp, but it was not till June 4 that the occupants, the Govas of Tradum and Nyuku, paid me a visit. They had heard of our long stay, and wished to find out the state of affairs for themselves. The Nyuku Gova began the conversation:

"Saka and Tradum are put down on your passport, but not Nyuku. Should you, nevertheless, go thither, I will allow you to stay one night, but not longer, for it is stated in the passport that you must travel straight to Tradum."

"My dear friend," I replied, "when once I am in your place

we shall become such good friends that you will ask me to stay a whole month to consolidate our friendship. Should you afterwards visit me in India, your visit will be the more agreeable the longer it lasts."

He nodded with a roguish smile, and no doubt considered me a wag, but added that he must obey the orders he had received from the Devashung.

"When I am in correspondence with the Mandarins in Lhasa, and am waiting for their answer, the Devashung has no right to interfere."

"Very well, then it will be best for you to remain here and not come to Tradum or Nyuku; provisions are still scarcer there."

Afterwards Pemba Tsering came again, bringing two sacks of barley and a sheep. He had become much more compliant since he had talked with the other officials, and promised he would try to procure what we needed. We had still two poor horses and a mule from Shigatse, and he was to have one of the animals as a reward. After some consideration he chose the mule. The two horses we sold for a mere trifle to a stranger.

Now we longed to get away from this miserable Saka-dzong and its sad associations. Out in God's open, glorious Nature the winds blow away sorrow. We daily calculated, Robert and I, how long it would be before Tundup Sonam and Tashi returned. If the answer were sent by the so-called Chinese flying post, it might arrive any moment. But the days passed and there was no news. One day some horsemen rode past our camp on the way to the west, and reported that they had seen my two messengers in Kung Gushuk's garden in Shigatse, but they knew nothing of their further intentions. "Patience," whispered the west wind again. In the maze of difficulties in which we became ever more involved, my hopes rested on the answer of the Chinamen. I had told the officials here that I would set off at once if they would allow us to take a more northern route to Nyuku, but, as they would not hear of it, we remained where we were.

When I looked out of my tent my eyes were attracted to

the dark grave on its hill. It seemed as if the grave held us fast, though we longed to get away from it. All was dreary and dismal; we missed Muhamed Isa, and his absence caused a great blank. But life goes on as usual. When the sun rises, the women of the village stroll about collecting dung into baskets, while the men drive the yaks and horse to pasture. They sing and whistle, children scream and dogs bark. Blue smoke rises from the chimneys of the village or from the black tents standing within walls among the houses. From the roof of the Saka-gompa with a statue of Padma Sambhava the single lama of the monastery blows his conch. Ravens and bluish-grey pigeons pick up all kinds of morsels among the tents, and the wolves which have come down in the night retire again to the mountains. Riders and caravans pass eastwards to a better land, where poplars, willows, and fruit trees are clothed in their finest summer dress. But we are prisoners in this desolate country, with Muhamed Isa's grave as a focus.

I soon perceived what a depressing effect the loss of the big powerful caravan leader had on my men: they became home-sick. They talked of the warmth of their own firesides, and they took to crocheting and knotting shoes for their children and acquaintances. They gathered round the evening fire and talked of the pleasant life in the villages of Ladak. Robert remarked how dreary and disagreeable Tibet was, and how warm and delightful it was in India; he was pining for his mother and his young wife. I should like to know whether any one was more eager to be off than myself, who had so much before me which must be accomplished. Yes, I saw only too plainly that I could not achieve all I was striving for with my present caravan; it was worn out and used up, which was really not to be wondered at after all it had gone through. My fate was driving me back to Ladak. But I must endeavour to make the most of my chances on the way. And then? All was dark to me. But I knew that I would never give in, and would not leave Tibet till I had done all that lay in my power to conquer the unknown land on the north of the upper Brahmaputra.

On the morning of the 5th came our old friend the Gova of Raga-tasam. He had heard that we were in difficulties, and offered to speak a good word on our behalf to Pemba Tsering. Afterwards the two came to my tent and informed me that I might take the northern route to Nyuku. The Gova received one of our best horses for his trouble. Now we had six left of our own horses, among them three veterans from Leh, two other horses and a mule. Next evening Guffaru came for the first time to receive instructions, and on June 7 we set out early.

I stopped a moment at the grave. It was striking and imposing in all its simplicity. In its dark chamber the weary one slumbers till the end of time. He listens to the howling of the western storms and the wolves, he freezes in the cold of winter, but he does not see the summer sun, and with longing for the well-remembered past he hears the horses stamping on the hard pebbles. I thought of the Lama Rinpoche in his dark den at Linga.

Farewell, and grateful thanks!

CHAPTER XL

ALONG BYWAYS TO TRADUM

THE day was brilliant; it was not spring, it was summer. Flies, wasps, and gadflies buzzed in the air, and worms of all kinds crept out of the ground to enjoy the warm season, all too short here. It was hot, 70.2° at one o'clock. The sun seemed to be as scorching as in India. The Sa-chu valley widens out westwards; wild geese, herons, and ducks sit on the banks of the river, and choughs croak on the mountain which we skirt on the right side of the valley. The fresh grass has sprouted out of the earth in its green summer garb, but it will not really thrive till after the warm rains. We meet a caravan of 200 yaks in five sections, each with two whistling drivers.

"Whence have you come?" I ask.

"From Tabie-tsaka, where we have been to fetch salt."

"Where does the lake lie?"

"To the north, in Bongba, thirty days' journey from here."

"Does the road cross over high passes?"

"Yes, there is a high pass twelve days to the north."

And then they passed on with their light-stepping yaks towards Saka-dzong. It was the first time I had heard this important lake mentioned, and I envied the men of the salt caravan who had traversed this way through the Trans-Himalaya quite unknown to Europeans.

We left the *tasam* on our left; we turned aside north-westwards straight to the Targyaling-gompa standing with its red *lhakang*, its small white buildings, and its large *chhorten* on a terrace immediately above the spot where Guffaru has pitched

the camp. Twenty lamas came down to find out whether we were thieves and robbers who intended to attack the convent. "Certainly not," Guffaru answered, "we are peaceful travellers passing the night here." "We will not allow it," they replied; "you must remain on the highroad." I now sent Rabsang up, and he was surrounded at the gate by thirty monks. He was told the same; a European had never been here, and none should ever enter the monastery. If the gentlemen of the *dzong* attempted to get us in, they should pay the penalty with their lives. Charming ecclesiastics! Even Rabsang, who was a Lamaist and wore several *gaos* on his neck, was not allowed in. He was in the service of a European. So inimically disposed were these monks that they stopped up the channel we drew our water from. The Devashung, they said, had nothing to do with them. We had heard in Saka-dzong that these monks were bellicose and independent; there they had said that the freebooter who had stopped us on May 31 must have been a disguised monk. But we could do without them and their monastery, which seemed small and unimportant.

Here our four puppies fell ill of a peculiar complaint: they ran about restlessly, snuffed and sneezed, had matter in their eyes, and no appetite. At night I heard one of my tent companions whine and howl, and next morning he lay dead on his rug.

Leaving Rawling's and Ryder's route to the left, we proceeded to the bank of the Chaktak-tsangpo and then northwards along the river. It has a swift current, but does not form rapids; to the south is seen the portal through which it emerges from the mountains. At the village Pasa-guk, which is larger than Saka-dzong, we bivouacked on the right bank. The river here was 141 feet broad, 2 ft. 7 in. deep at most, and carried 629 cubic feet of water. On May 28 it carried 664 cubic feet, but it receives the Sa-chu and other tributaries below the village Pasa-guk.

In the middle of the village is a *serai* with a large store of salt in bags. Here a market is held from time to time, salt being the medium of exchange. I tried to obtain further

information about the country in the north, but when I compared the different data together, the result was a hopeless muddle. For instance, I asked travellers who came from Tabie-tsaka, how far they marched each day, and where they passed lakes, rivers, and passes; and when I added the distances together and laid down the direction on the map, the line reached to Kashgar, all through Tibet and Eastern Turkestan! It was impossible to obtain useful data about the country to the north. I must see it with my own eyes. But how would that be possible?

The Hajji came to me, angry and excited, to complain that Guffaru had struck him. I sat in judgment and heard evidence. The Hajji had refused to watch the horses when his turn came, and the caravan bashi had therefore thrashed him. The sentence was, that the Hajji should receive his discharge in Nyuku.

Robert and I sat on the velvety grass on the bank and gazed with longing eyes at the half-clear water dancing merrily on to its destination at the coast. An old man and a youth joined us, and entertained us with dance and song. The old man danced and stamped on the ground in a three-cornered mask of goat leather with red strips and bells, and the youth sang this unintelligible song:

Hail, O God, god of the pass!
Many stars sparkle in the night.
To-day is a fine day.
Would that rain might come!
Give me a bit of tea or a small coin.
O, Cook, give me a pinch of meal and a radish.
Such is the mask that is worn in the Chang-tang.
At the right ear a curl, neither large nor small,
At the left a pin, neither large nor small;
Neither shade nor sun.
There is a father's pin and a mother's pin.
Everywhere we have pins with branches,
For they guard us from all dangers.
The horse holds his head high.
And the rider holds his head high,
The gods are high, the earth is low.
You have gold and silver galore.

May your cattle multiply, your flocks and your property increase !
May your family increase !
The King of Ladak sits between a golden and a silver king.
Now is the song ended.

On June the 10th I left the Chaktak-tsangpo to the right, unfortunately without having learnt whence it comes. We ascended a side valley named Rock, in a north-westerly direction. We had previously passed two towers which had formerly been the fort of a rebellious lama. He was at feud with Saka-dzong, but was defeated. In the camp at the pool Churu the evening seemed to me fearfully long. Home-sickness had become infectious. The Ladakis sang no more, but made shoes for their children, and thereby turned their thoughts more intently to their home. I too found no rest after the day's work. If we only knew what answer the Mandarins would send, but our messenger did not return. We seemed to have stumbled into a morass and to be stamping in it without moving on. Oh, thou dreary, awful Tibet, thou black, poor superstitious folk ! In the stillness of the night the step of the camp watchman was pleasant company.

After a night temperature of 14.4° we rode on westwards over a very flat pass, a watershed between the Chaktak-tsangpo and Nyuku, along a road which had once been a *tasam*; numerous ruins and *manis* were memorials of that time. The district was thickly peopled by nomads, and black tents were often seen where sheep bleated and dogs barked ; women and boys guarded the flocks, and yaks grazed on the slopes. The country calls to mind the summer pastures on the Pamir. A second puppy died in the night, and was almost eaten up by ravens before morning.

On June 12 we came again to the *tasam* at Nyuku where we set up our camp. The Gova of Nyuku, whose friendship I had gained at Saka-dzong, was very obliging, and said that I was quite at liberty to make another detour to the north, as I seemed to dislike the highroad. It would take me up to a pass, where almost all the mountains of the world could be seen, especially Lumbo-gangri immediately to the north. Here

we should come in contact with people of the province of Bongba, who perhaps would sell us all necessaries. In Nyuku the third puppy died. The Tibetans said that it suffered from a throat complaint called *gakpa*, which is very common in the country. Mamma Puppy gave herself no trouble about her little ones when they were ill, but seemed rather to avoid them. We washed them with warm water, and tended them to the best of our power, and did everything we could think of to save the last. The Tibetans could not understand how we could make such a fuss about a dog.

Bluish-white flashes quivered over the mountains all the evening, and their outlines stood out sharp and dark in the lightning. That is a sign of the setting in of the monsoon rains on the southern flank of the Himalayas, and all look forward to them. When rain falls up here, the grass grows up in a couple of days, the cattle become fat and sleek, the milk is thick and yellow; at the present time it is thin and white, and produces little butter. The existence of the nomads, and indeed the prosperity of the whole country, depends on the monsoon. It is the summer pasture which helps the herds to endure the scarcity of the rest of the year. If the rains fail, the stock languish and die.

The night is silent. Only occasionally is heard the hearty laugh of a girl or the bark of a dog. The camp watchman hums an air to keep himself awake.

The 13th was a lazy day; we had to wait for Tundup Sonam and Tashi. I always shave myself on rest days—it is pleasant to feel clean, even when there is no one to smarten oneself up for. Robert shot three wild geese, and caught two yellow goslings which walked into his tent and made hay there. We put them in the crystal-clear Menchu river, hoping that some kindly goose-mamma would take to them.

From here it is said to be only four days' journey to a district in Nepal, where there are fir-woods. Just fancy: fir-wood as in Sweden and in Simla! But we must remain in this dreary land.

Just as we were starting on the following day the Hajji,

Islam Ahun, and Gaffar came to me, and demanded exemption from night duty and separate rations if they were to stay with me. I called all the other men together, and asked if any one else would join them now that they were to be dismissed. But no one wished to. Our Hajji, the only one of the Mohammedans who had been in Mecca—had indeed been twice there—was the only rascal in the caravan. He had instigated the others. In my experience Mecca pilgrims are always scoundrels. The Hajji declared that he preferred robbers and tramps on the road to Guffaru and the other Ladakis. The three men vanished from sight as we marched north-westwards up the valley of the Men-chu.

In camp No. 177, on June 15, I held a grand reception, for some chiefs from the direction of Bongba came to visit me, and our old friend, the Gova of Tradum, arrived. They decided that I might ride a short distance to the north, but only on condition that I came back the same day. So on the 16th we rode on fresh hired horses up to the Kilung-la, where the view was instructive and showed the lie of the land. Before us was the dark Lumbo-gangri with its deep wild valleys and steep cliffs, its small glacier tongues and caps of eternal snow. The men of the district said that the mountain was holy, and was a kind of portal or forecourt to the Kang-rinpoche, the celebrated pilgrimage mountain near the sources of the Indus. Behind Lumbo-gangri are the valley and river of the Rukyok-tsangpo, which flows to the Chaktak-tsangpo. It was now clear to me that these summits, of which bearings were taken by Ryder and Wood, could not lie on the watershed of the rivers flowing to the ocean. But no one knew the true aspect of the country farther north, and the Bongba men had been ordered to stop us if we tried to force our way in that direction. I could not by entreaties or threats obtain more than the view from the Kilung-la. The further we proceeded westwards the more of the blank space on the map was left behind us. That was exceedingly annoying, but my hopes were still fixed on the Chinese letters from Lhasa.

On the morning of the 17th all the mountains were covered

with snow, but the day was warm and fine as we rode up to the Serchung-la, and saw to the south-west the northernmost crest of the Himalayas and the broad valley of the Brahmaputra. The valley descending from the pass is full of brushwood and drifting sand, which is piled up in dunes to a height of nearly 20 feet.

After an interesting and successful march we came to the valley junction Dambak-rong. But the day was not yet over. We heard that Nazer Shah's son had arrived the day before at Tradum on his way to Ladak with twenty-two mules. A messenger was therefore despatched to ask him to wait for us, and give us tidings of Tundup Sonam and Tashi. The Gova of Tradum also rode home to get all in order against our arrival. A short time passed by, and then a horseman came up at a smart trot from the Serchung valley. He had evidently followed our track; he rode straight to my tent, dismounted, and handed me a letter with a large seal, bearing the words, "Imperial Chinese Mission, Tibet," and the same in Chinese characters.

Now our fate would be settled. The Ladakis crowded round my tent. I perceived that they hoped we should be obliged to return by the direct road to Ladak. They longed for home, and were not inspired by the same interests as myself. The tension was extreme as I opened the letter. It was dated at Lhasa on June 3, and had been fourteen days on the way. It was written in faultless English by Ho Tsao Hsing, first secretary to H.E. Chang (Tang Darin), and ran as follows:

DEAR DR. HEDIN—Your letter to His Excellency Chang dated the 14th May was duly received. Knowing that you have arrived at Raka-tatsang, that Devashung hindered you to proceed foreward. His Excellency is very sorry to hear such occurrence; and he instructed me to write you the following:—

That in His Excellency's last letter to you he wrote you to return by the way you came; and now he does not understand why you are taking another road contrary to what he wrote you, consequently, you have met with such inconveniences, to which His Excellency regrets very much indeed. His Excellency has,

now, again ordered Devashung and officials along the way to give you all possible protection and comfort, but he sincerely wishing you *not* to change your direction to the N.W., where both the country and people are wild [I wonder how he could know that], and that accidents might happen, which His Excellency can hardly bear any responsibility.

Therefore, His Excellency wishes you only to return by the way as you came, not to venture in other directions.

His Excellency gives his best regards to you and wishing you a happy and safe return.—I am yours very truly,

HO TSAO HSING.

That was all I got by the stratagem which had cost us so much loss of time. A positive prohibition to proceed north-westwards to the land of my dreams. Now the Devashung would issue fresh orders, and we should be watched more closely than ever. Now the iron gates would be closed again from the south, and the way to the forbidden land barred. Tang Darin was as immovable as the State Secretary for India, Lord Morley. But he stimulated my ambition, and for that I have to thank him. To begin with, we seized the copy of our passport, which was to be transferred from Gova to Gova all along the road.

But not yet had this fateful day come to a close. At sunset came Tundup Sonam and Tashi, dusty and ragged, with their bundles on their backs. "Welcome and well done, 20 rupees each and new suits of clothes is your reward. What news?" No letters, but only a note from Ma that he had forwarded my letters to Lhasa, and sent a letter from Gulam Kadir to Muhamed Isa. They had reached Shigatse in eleven days, and had rested there three days. Then they had set out from Tashi-lunpo directly westwards. They made a fast and long march on the first day, and climbed up to the pass Ta-la at sunset, where nine highwaymen, two with guns and the others with swords, fell upon them and threw them to the ground. The two guns were set on their rests and the barrels pointed to the men's heads, the seven swords were drawn, and one of the robbers said:

"If you value your lives, hand out everything of value you have."

Frightened out of their wits, the two Ladakis begged them to take all they wanted if they would only spare their lives. The nine robbers then opened their bundles and thoroughly plundered them, taking even their little *gaos* and images, as well as their cooking utensils and 18 rupees in silver. They were allowed to keep the clothes they had on their backs. By pure chance the robbers had overlooked a small packet of 30 *tengas*, which Tundup Sonam had put at the back of his girdle. The robbers cleared them out in a minute, and then disappeared into the mountains. Our two defeated heroes remained weeping on the battle-field till dark, and then they went off very slowly at first, turning round frequently and fancying they saw a robber in every shadow, but afterwards they quickened their pace almost to a run. Dead tired, they crept under two boulders by the wayside, and next morning came to three black tents, where they got food, and were told that a lama had been robbed and stripped naked on the Ta-la two days before. But now they were safe, and it was touching to see how delighted they were to be with us again. They had seen Muhamed Isa's grave, and the conversation about it reminded Tsering of his sorrow.

On June 18 we travel across open country to Tradum, our route following the northern side of the valley while the *tasam* runs along the southern. The ground was sandy. Small irritating horseflies buzz in the nostrils of the horses and drive them frantic. They walk with their noses on the ground like the wild asses to escape the flies. To the right is the Tutopukpa, a mountain to which corpses are carried on yaks from Tradum to be cut up. We ride between pools where wild geese are plentiful with their pretty yellow goslings. At a projecting rock, cairns and streamer poles are set up; the wall of rock is black, but all the side facing the road is painted red—"Ah, this is blood on Balder's sacrificial stone." Here the village of Tradum can be seen, its temple and its *chhorten* on a hill. To the south-west the dark snow-crowned rampart of the Himalayas appears, wild, grand, and precipitous. To the south-east lies the *tasam*, a light winding riband, and our path

runs into it; it is 40 feet broad between grass-grown terraces of sand; it is the great trunk-road of Tibet.

We had scarcely set up our camp when the discharged Hajji and his two companions came up and salaamed. But I was angry, and drove them away. I afterwards heard that they wept, and I was heartily sorry that I had been so unkind. But it was too late, for they were seen tramping out wearily into the steppe when the shades of evening fell.

The monastery Tradum-gompa is subject to Tashi-lunpo, and its five monks live on the produce of their sheep and yaks, and carry on trade with Nepal. Round the temple are eight *chhortens*, and in the *lhakang*, the hall of the gods, the immortal son of Sakya is enthroned between the eleven-headed, six-armed Avalokitesvara and other deities. On a small hill of schist above the convent is a hermit's dwelling, where there is a splendid view over the Brahmaputra valley and the Tsa-chu-tsangpo as it emerges from the mountains.

Here died our fourth puppy, which I had hoped to keep as a remembrance of Shigatse. Mamma Puppy had now her mat to herself, and outside the tents lay the two black dogs from Ngangtse-tso.

The Gova of Tradum was an excellent, genial rogue, and had a thorough contempt for the Devashung. He would not let me follow up the Tsa-chu valley, but made no objection to an excursion to the Kore-la pass, two days' journey off to the south-west, and belonging to the Himalayan range which is the watershed between the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. He also let us hire six horses, and gave us two guides for the journey, which was to be commenced on the morning of June 20.

The first night we were to encamp at the spot where the Tsa-chu-tsangpo enters the upper Brahmaputra. I rode south-south-west with my usual retinue over grassy steppe and sand-dunes. In front of us were three wanderers with bundles on their backs and staves in their hands. When we overtook them they stopped, came forward, and laid their foreheads on the ground at my feet. It was the Hajji and the two other

men. I was glad of the opportunity of taking them into favour again. For the future they were to follow our yaks.

The camp was pitched on the right bank of the river, at the foot of the hill crowned by the ruins of the old Liktse monastery. Here an important trade-road crosses the river and a ferry maintains communication between the banks. The Tsa-chu river had here a breadth of 35½ yards, and a depth of barely 40 inches, while the Brahmaputra was 120 yards broad by 5¾ feet deep, and was much more imposing than farther down. The absolute height was 14,977 feet. It was not easy to carry the rope across the stream, for a strong south-west gale was blowing and the waves were high. Robert rowed out from the right bank with the rope, and from the left some Ladakis waded out as far as they could in the shallow, slowly deepening, water to catch the end thrown to them and secure it on shore. When at last we had stretched the rope across, it broke with the pressure of the wind and the waves, and the work had to be done again. We noted a temperature of 53.6° in the air and of 59.7° in the water, but the men were so chilled by the wind that they had to make a good fire. It also rained heavily—the first rain we had had since we left Ladak—and thunder rolled among the mountains.

For the first time the minimum temperature in the night, 37.8°, was above freezing-point, and the morning was beautiful after the storm: the sky was only half covered with bright summer clouds, not a breath of air stirred, and the surface of the river was smooth as a mirror, only slightly broken by slowly moving whirlpools. The ferry was already plying across with passengers and goods. The ferryman is paid a *tenga* for each passage, and he crosses over twice in the hour. Our horses and yaks were made to swim over the river after they had grazed at night on the steppes on the left bank.

We rode 21½ miles on the 21st, but first paid a visit to the little Liktse-gompa monastery, which stands on the inner side of the hill, and therefore has not the fine view obtained from the old ruined monastery on the summit. From its window-openings the monks could watch the oscillating life of the river

during the various seasons of the year: its slow fall in spring; its rise during summer, when volumes of turbid water come down from melting snow-fields and glaciers; its decline in autumn, and the freezing of the river in the cold of winter. And they could see the breaking-up of the ice in spring, and the great clattering slabs dancing down the current. But now the prospect before the eyes of the ten monks is only a wretched loamy valley between barren hills, for their convent lies apart from all roads. Liktse-gompa is a dependency of Sera, but receives no support from it, and possesses no herds. The profits from the ferry are the only revenue of the monks. The abbot, Punjun Dung, with a red turban and a grey beard, showed me the gods in the *lhakang*, Buddha, Padma Sambhava, etc. Among the usual sacred objects on the altar were two human skulls converted into drinking vessels, one of them lined with silver. In the courtyard the holy dog was chained up.

Then we mounted and rode off quickly. We perceived at once that this road is much frequented. On the steppe and in open soft valley bottoms it is less clearly marked, for there every one marches where he likes; but over passes and on spurs with hard stone the tracks converge from all sides, and there the road has been trodden down and worn in the course of centuries. On the small pass Tsasa-la we met a large caravan laden with barley.

"Where have you come from?" I ask.

"From Mundang in the country of Lo Gapu."

Mundang is marked on the English maps of Nepal, but who was Lo Gapu, "the King of the Southern Land"? It sounded so grand.

The next pass is called Dorab-la, and from the top we see the Chockar-shung-chu, a broad valley with a brook draining partly from the Kore-la, and flowing to the Brahmaputra.

While we are resting, Guffaru passes with his black baggage-train in close order, a troop of laden yaks, whistling and singing Tibetans, and some Ladakis with our own horses as a rearguard. They soon disappear in the dust of the road, two of our men resting a while in a cleft to take a puff or

two from their weather-worn narghilés. From this point they march westwards to the rendezvous, while we continue southwards.

In the valley leading up to the Ngurkung-la a large salt caravan on the way to Nepal was encamped. The twelve leaders had piled up a fine shelter of sacks of salt against the violent wind. We then came to the very broad valley which ascends to the saddle of the pass visible in the south. We rode up for hours, though the ascent was not noticeable, but the wind was dead against us. To the right is the water-parting chain of the Himalayas which we had seen from Tradum. A curious, sharply outlined cloud, like a white torpedo, covered it, and from the northern extremity small fleecy flakes parted from time to time and floated away. We camped near some black tents in a side valley close to the extraordinarily flat pass.

CHAPTER XLI

A PEEP INTO NEPAL

It was on June 22 that I stood on the platform of the Kore-la pass and gave a stolen glance into Nepal, and tried to get a glimpse of Dhaulagiri peak, 26,670 feet high. But the morning was dull, heavy clouds lay like pillows on the earth, and nothing could be seen of the surrounding mountains. "We must wait till it clears," was the only order I could give. But just then a milk-girl came from a camp of 20 tents which was near at hand. The people were Nepalese subjects, but were camping on the Tibetan side. The girl said that it was only a short day's journey to the nearest permanent dwellings and gardens, and two days' journey to Lo Gapu's summer residence.

Then we thought: "We may as well ride down the southern side of the pass as stay up here in the wind." No sooner said than done! The tents are folded up, the animals laden, we mount and ride along the eastern side of the valley up to the Kore-la, which from the Tibetan side little resembles a pass, for to the eye the grass-grown or unfruitful loose ground seems quite level. Of the snowy mountains on the western side of the valley only the dark base is visible; layers of clouds lie close above the earth; one feels as though one could push one's head against the roof. A ruined house, where perhaps a frontier guard once dwelt, a couple of long *manis*, and loose blocks of conglomerate stand on the top. A caravan comes up from Nebuk in the bottom of the valley.

We look round in vain for the actual watershed, and find

it only by noticing rivulets running together and flowing southwards. Here we light a fire and take observations. The view is marvellous, at any rate a relief such as we have not seen for a long time. The mighty snowy mountains to the south, which yesterday broke through the clouds, are, indeed, obscured, but our valleys fall steeply and unite into a large valley, in the depths of which grassy plots and fields shine in deep spring verdure amid the everlasting grey, yellow, and red landscape. Down below the sun is shining, and behind us the sky is clear above the Brahmaputra valley, while here and round all the snowy mountains float opaque clouds. From the saddle lying west of our point of vantage innumerable valleys radiate out; the surface of the ridges between them is nearly level, or dips gently to the south-east, while the valleys are deeply cut in like cañons, and the promontories at the meeting of the valleys are broken short off. Perhaps some of the nearest peaks of the Himalayas rise like islands above the sea of clouds, for here and there a reflexion from sun-lighted firn-fields seems to be trying to break through the veil of clouds.

We stand on the frontier between Tibet and Nepal. Behind us to the north we have the flat, level land on the southern bank of the Tsangpo. We have mounted only 315 feet from the river to the Kore-la, where the height is 15,292 feet. And from the pass there is a headlong descent to the Kali Gandak, an affluent of the Ganges. By means of a canal cut through the Kore-la the Brahmaputra might be turned into the Ganges. Northern India needs water for irrigation, but the gain would perhaps be small, for the Brahmaputra in Assam would be as much diminished as the Ganges was increased. Tibet would lose by the change, and a number of villages on the Kali Gandak would be swept away. A new road would be opened for the invasion of India from the north, and therefore on the whole it is perhaps best for all parties concerned to leave things as they are. But the changes here indicated will some time come to pass without artificial aid, for the tentacles of the Kali Gandak are eating back northwards into the

mountains much more quickly than the Tsangpo is eroding its valley. Some time or other, perhaps in a hundred thousand years, the Ganges system will have extended its tentacles to the bank of the Tsangpo, and then will be formed a bifurcation which, in the course of time, will bring about a total revolution in the proportions of the two rivers and their drainage areas.

Now we are in Nepal and go on foot down the declivities. Here little has been done to improve the road. Occasionally an awkward block of granite has been rolled away, leaving a gap in the breastwork; in other respects the caravan traffic has done most for the road, wearing it down. It is easy and pleasant to go down southwards towards denser air; it becomes warmer, and we breathe more easily; the verdure increases, and flowers of different colours make the grass gay. We try to forget that we must toil up all these slopes again; let us go down, down, to enjoy a summer life, if only for twenty-four hours, and forget dreary Tibet. An hour ago the wind blew icy cold on the pass, and now we feel the soft zephyrs gently caressing the heights. Robert takes in deep draughts of the tepid air and fancies he hears a whispered welcome to India; Tsering and Rabsang become lively and contented, and I muse over a visit to the King of the Southland.

Three horsemen rode slowly up the ascent. Two of them were turning their prayer mills. They looked astonished. We asked whence they came and whither they were going. They were going to the tent village on the plateau. When they were told who we were, in answer to their question, they dismounted and begged pardon for not greeting us at first. I readily forgave them, for I looked like a ragged tramp. They advised us to pass the night in one of the houses of Lo Gapu, and invited us to visit them in their tent village on our way back.

The gradient becomes less steep, and we come to an expansion where three valleys meet, the Kungchuk-kong, which we have followed, in the middle, the Pama on the east, and the Damm on the west. From the Damm valley only comes a small gushing brook. We pass along the right side of

the united valley. On the same side a very large valley opens, the Yamchuk-pu, with an irrigation channel running down from its brook to the villages and fields below. In the village Yamchuk we come to the first houses and trees. On the left side of the valley lies a large monastery with avenues of trees and long rows of *manis*; it is called Gubuk-gompa. Fields, grassy patches, and bushes become more numerous. Then comes a succession of villages on the left side of the valley, which is barely 2½ furlongs broad.

Below the side valley Gurkang-pu, on the left, pebble beds stand in perpendicular walls with numerous caves and grottos. These are apparently used as dwellings, for they are connected with the houses and walls in front of them. Lower down we come to the village Nebuk, among gardens. The architecture is of the usual Tibetan style, white and red masonry, flat roofs, and decorations of streamer poles. The vegetation becomes more luxuriant and the fields larger. We frequently pass ruined walls and towers, perhaps relics of the time when Nepal was at feud with Tibet. Now the densely peopled and well-tilled valley has a peaceful aspect, and no frontier guards hinder our advance.

The usual *manis* lie along the road, and a large red *chhorten* or *stupa* has a touch of the Indian style. Below three villages lying close together the valley contracts slightly. Near a lonely house we encamped in a lovely garden, with fine green trees, among waving cornfields. A woman told us that this place, called Nama-shu, belonged to Lo Gapu, and that no one might stay in the garden without his permission. However, we established ourselves there, and inhaled with delight the mild dense air, and heard the wind rustling through the tree-tops.

Soon two men appeared, who were in the service of Lo Gapu, asking for information about us. They said that we were in the district Tso, and that the river was called Tso-kharki-tsangpo. A village we can see just below our camp was named Nyanyo, and from there Mentang, the residence of Lo Gapu, could be reached by crossing only two spurs of the

mountains. He, they said, was a frontier chief, who paid no tribute to the Maharaja of Nepal, but was obliged to pay a visit to His Highness every fifth year. He had 500 subjects. The people for three days farther south were Lamaists and spoke a Tibetan dialect, in which, however, many Indian and Persian words were incorporated.

When one of the men had obtained all the information he desired, he rode down the valley to make his report to the frontier chief. Meanwhile we held a consultation. I had only Robert, Tsering, Rabsang, and two Tibetans with me, and our funds consisted of only 24 rupees. The temptation was great to wander a few days more southwards through the wild deep valleys of the Himalayas. Here, in the Nama-shu camp, we were at a height of 12,487 feet, and therefore 2805 feet lower than the Kore-la. Every day's journey southwards would bring us into a denser atmosphere, and even now we were not far from shady coniferous woods. But would it be prudent to advance further into Nepal? We were much puzzled, and considered the matter from all sides. Our money would not last more than two days. Our horses belonged to the Gova of Tradum, and we had agreed with him that we would only take a look into Nepal from the Kore-la, and now we had crossed the boundary and descended into a land where our position was less secure than in Tibet. We might fall into a trap before we were aware of it. Lo Gapu might arrest us and ask for orders from Khatmandu. The greatest danger, however, was that the Tibetans might close the frontier and render our return impossible, and then say that now we had left their country we might not enter again. And then we should be cut off from the main caravan, and all the results of my journey would be endangered. I therefore decided to turn back early next morning before Lo Gapu's men had time to come up and arrest us.

The evening was fine and long, and we enjoyed it thoroughly under the rustling of the thickly foliaged trees. I felt perfectly comfortable and breathed freely: the heart had not to labour so heavily as on the Chang-tang; it worked for

hours together without an effort; our feet were warm, and we slept as we had seldom done. For in the Chang-tang if one sleeps even eight hours one does not feel rested and refreshed on rising; one does not derive the proper benefit from sleep. Here we experienced a thoroughly comfortable feeling after our night's rest, and our only disappointment came from the clouds, which concealed the summits of the Himalayas to the south and south-south-west. Only now and then the peaks looked forth for a minute.

On June 23 we mounted our horses again. We had heard no word of Lo Gapu. When the messenger had left us he was convinced that we should continue our way down the valley, and the little potentate was perhaps now expecting our arrival. He might wait! We rode slowly up to the Kore-la, left our old road to the right, and camped at Kung-muga.

I was sitting at my drawing when a horseman came clanking up. He held in his hand a green flag, a messenger's badge among the Chinese and Tibetans. I felt sure that he had some connection with strict measures against us, but found that he was only the bearer of a proclamation from Lhasa to all the stations as far as Gartok, that horses and baggage animals should be supplied to two Chinamen who had been despatched to find me out and talk with me, and convey to me a letter from His Excellency, Lien Darin. They might be expected any moment.

Midsummer Day was as dull as possible. The whole country was buried in impenetrable fog, and even the adjoining tents were invisible. And when it had cleared a little, the mountains were still concealed. We rode north-westwards on an excellent road, and were astonished at the numerous *manis* with their close, fine, raised inscriptions on purple and dark-green schist; other prayer stones had characters 1.2 or 1.6 inches high, while the largest characters were nearly 8 inches high, so that there was only room for one character on each slab. Then six slabs were placed in a row to spell out the sacred formula, "Om mani padme hum." On some votive stones the characters were red, cut out in

round pieces of granite with a white underlayer. The largest *mani* was 262 feet long.

We passed encampments with large herds; wild asses grazed along with tame yaks. All the men we met halted and saluted us. The Gova of Tradum came to meet us; he pulled a very solemn face, and wondered whether Lo Gapu would be angry at our visit to Nepal. We reached Bando, near the small lake Tsotot-karpo, over the small saddle Tasang-la, and found Guffaru waiting for us with the caravan.

On the 25th we made a short march up to Chikum, whence the Tsotot-karpo is still visible. We had only provisions for one day, but the Gova of Tradum offered to procure more if we would pay well for the horses we had to hire. He had no fear, he said, of the Chinese who were coming; if they scolded him for allowing us to travel on the south bank of the Tsangpo, he would reply that it was easier to supply us with provisions there than on the north side. He had formerly been a lama in Tashi-gembe, but had lost his heart to a lady. To hush up the affair he had started on a pilgrimage to Kang-rinpoche, but was caught and forbidden to return. Then he had gradually worked his way up, and was now chief of Tradum, and was just as great a rascal in secular life as he had been in the religious life. However, he rendered us good service.

The view from our elevated camp was magnificent. When the full moon had risen up in the sky, the small lake shone like a silver blade. The sun had left only an afterglow on the western horizon, but the whole plain of the Brahmaputra and the mountains of Chang-tang in the north were clearly defined in dull clear shades, which left all the finer details indistinguishable. A cloud with bright, silvery, white margins floated before the moon. A little to the right another cloud caught a reflexion of the sun, and showed golden margins. They were the angels of night and day fighting for supremacy. Soon night had won the victory, and now the moon cast a bright path over the lake, while all around was involved in a general mist.

When day had resumed its sway we rode in the morning

air through swarms of flies, stinging gnats, and horse-flies up over the Tagu-la and down the Tambak valley. To the west the most northerly chain of the Himalayas made a magnificent display, and to the north-west lay the broad open valley of the Brahmaputra, the river winding along the middle like a blue riband. This evening, too, the return of night called forth a brilliant play of colours and tone-effects. Light, restless, motionless to the eye, but riven by the upper winds like old prayer-streamers on a pass, the clouds sailed at sunset in the vault of heaven. The moon, the friend of all nocturnal wanderers and sleepers in the open air, illumines the surroundings of our tents, among which the blue smoke of the camp-fires lies like a veil over the ground. The yaks stand still as shadows, and now and then their teeth are heard grinding against the cartilaginous process of the upper jaw. The Tradum Gova and his servants hum their evening prayer and rattle their prayer-mills.

In the morning comes a quickly passing shower and another before noon. We notice all the signs of the sky, and wish for rain as much as the Tibetans, not on our own account, but for the light-footed antelopes, the wild asses, and the mountain sheep. The clouds are blue-black over the mountains to the south, and from them hang down elegantly curved fringes and draperies heavy with rain. One can hear in imagination the drops splashing on the stones, and new-born torrents rushing down the valleys. The trifling rain that has fallen in our neighbourhood can only moisten the ground for a short time. The drops made a pleasant sound as they pelted on the Tradum Gova's umbrella and on my Curzon hat. Thunder rolled heavily and solemnly round about in the mountains, like an echo of the trumpet of the last judgment.

Then we cross the Nerung-tsangpo, come out into the great valley plain of the Brahmaputra, and encamp in a country inhabited by numbers of nomads. The Gova of Nagor was a tall, agreeable man, who procured us *tsamba*, *chang*, and goose eggs—a pleasant change from our perpetual diet of mutton. Robert and Shukkur Ali caught fish. The Gova told me that

his parents, who belonged to Kham, had made a pilgrimage to the Kang-rinpoche and had left their little son behind, either by mistake or on purpose. The youngster had grown up in the tents of the wild nomads, and now, though a stranger, had become the chief of the district.

On the morning of the 28th we rode up to Namla-gompa, on a rocky prominence where the view was extensive and instructive. At the eastern foot of the projecting mountain lies the village Namla, a few poor stone cabins, and here the river Pung-chu, flowing out of the lake Ujam-tso, enters the plain. The monastery contains some images of gilded bronze, and seven monks, of whom one, a man of sixty-six, has lived fifty years within its walls. They are poor and have to beg, but they receive freewill offerings from the nomads living in the neighbourhood.

Across a plain of cracked loamy soil, which is flooded at high water, we gain our camp on the bank of the Tsangpo; the river looks like a lake, and that this is also the case in late autumn is shown in Ryder's remarkably conscientiously drawn and accurate map. The breadth here is 973 yards broad, and the maximum depth only 2.4 feet. It may, therefore, be easily waded, and the yak caravan marches quietly through the water. How different it is farther east, where the river, hemmed in between steep mountains, is deep and tumultuous! In late summer it cannot be waded here, and even a boat dare not venture over because of the treacherous, shifting sand-banks. During our measurements the Ladakis went across the river, measuring the breadth with poles and ropes, and held the boat still while I investigated the velocity of the current. When the work was finished, Rehim Ali began to carry Robert to the bank, but he slipped on the smooth, clayey bottom, and both took an involuntary bath, causing all the rest of us to laugh heartily.

Next day the fragile baggage was conveyed across in a boat, and the rest on hired yaks, which tramped through the turbid dirty-grey water. On the northern bank we ride through peculiar country. Here are lakes and swamps, caused by arms of the river, and lying amid a collection of sandhills as much

as 26 feet high. We try all directions to avoid sandhills and deep creeks, and frequently ride straight through basins with yielding ground; in some there is a slight current, while others are stagnant. Here and there islets of sand rise out of the water, some barren, others with grass and stalks. It is a thoroughly disintegrated country, but full of pleasing variety. Gnats pursue us in regular clouds. Some men go in front to pilot us. We often get into deep water and have to turn back. The high water washes away the greater part of the driftsand, and deposits it on the banks of the Brahmaputra lower down. But when the river falls, fresh sand accumulates and forms new dunes. The driftsand therefore finds a resting-place here on its way to the east. We encamped by the last lagoon, and heard the fishes splashing in the water. The whole country reminds me of Lob, the swampy region in Eastern Turkestan, and the continual struggle there between driftsand and flowing water. The district is named Dongbo, and here the Gova of Tuksum and other chiefs awaited us. The first-named had heard that the Chinamen, of whose coming we had been informed, had left Saka-dzong and were on their way hither. He expected that they would arrive before evening.

On June 30 we made most of our march along the *tasam*, on which Nain Sing and the English expedition had travelled; for I durst not pass round Tuksum, which was mentioned on my passport. The greater part of the way runs among fine, regular, crescent-shaped dunes, which move eastwards over the plain before the prevailing wind. They are ephemeral phenomena: they live and die, but are always replaced by others. The horns of the crescent protrude far in the direction of the wind, and the slope is very steep on the windward side, as much as 17 degrees, while on the sheltered side it is as steep as the falling sand will allow.

Ganju-gompa stands on an isolated hill to the west of the Ganju-la. It is subordinate to the Brebung monastery, and has a *lhakang* with twelve pillars and four rows of divans, as well as four large drums. The statues of the gods look down with gentle smiles on the homage paid to them by nomads

and travellers. Only five monks and as many dogs live in Ganju.

The whole population of Tuksum came out to meet us before their village. It was agreed with the Gova that Guffaru and the main caravan should proceed to Shamsang, while I with a couple of attendants travelled by forbidden roads on the south side of the river. In the evening a deputation of Ladakis came to wait on me with the request that they should be allowed to give a feast in honour of Muhamed Isa, to be paid for out of his outstanding pay. But I thought this a little too cool, seeing that the money belonged to the widow of the deceased. They might have a feast, however, at my own expense, but there would be nothing but mutton, *chang*, and tea.

On the morning of July 1 I had another application, this time from five young beggar girls, ragged and black, with bundles in frames of wood on their backs, and large pilgrims' staves in their hands. They had been, like so many others, at the Kang-rinpoche, and reckoned it a year's journey to their home in Kham. They beg their way from tent to tent. It must be a serious burden to the nomads to maintain the numerous pilgrims that pass along this road.

We said good-bye to Guffaru and his followers on July 2, and riding in a south-westerly direction over the plain, set up our camp 191 on the left bank of the Brahmaputra, which here carried down 1978 cubic feet of water. Next morning the baggage was taken over, and we had also the honour of helping over the river a high lama, whose acquaintance I had made in Tashi-lunpo. He wore a yellow robe with a red mantle, and had a small yellow wooden hat as bright as metal. His servants were armed with guns and swords, and took all their baggage over the river on yaks. But, unfortunately, the yaks got into deep water and began to swim, so that, of course, all their baggage was thoroughly soaked. We also helped a shepherd with some lambs over to the other side, and if we had waited longer we might have done a ferryman's work all day with our boat.

Then we crossed over two other arms, and [redacted] total discharge of the Brahmaputra at this place proved to be 3249 cubic feet. The figures, however, obtained on gauging the river so near its source, are of inferior value, especially when the melting of the snow has quite set in, partly because the source streams rise towards evening, carrying the water from the day's thaw down to the main valley, partly because the volume of water depends to a great extent on the weather. At the first downpour of rain the rivers are little affected, for the water is absorbed by the dry soil; but when this is soaked through, the water runs off, and the rivers swell enormously after a single rainy day. When the sky is overcast without rain they fall, but in quite clear weather the sun thaws the snow and causes the rivers to rise again.

It was a long day's journey, for in many of the tents the people refused to give us the help we wanted, and therefore we passed on to the great tributary Gyang-chu, which comes from the south and receives many streams from the northernmost range of the Himalayas.

I have no time to give an account of the geography of this region on the south side of the Brahmaputra. I will only say that during the following days we were cut off from the main river by low mountains, and that we did not encamp again on its bank till July 6, when we came to the Cherok district. We had left several tributaries behind us, and the main stream carried only 1554 cubic feet of water.

After another short day's march we rejoined Guffaru's party in Shamsang on the great high-road, where twenty-one tents were now standing. The chiefs of the neighbourhood were very attentive, and did not say a word against my proposal to go up to Kubi-gangri, which shows its snowy peaks to the south-west, and in which the sources of the Brahmaputra were said to lie. They procured us provisions for twelve days, and we had not had so free a hand for some time. Here nothing had been heard of Chinese or Tibetan pursuers from Lhasa.

CHAPTER XLII

IN SEARCH OF THE SOURCE OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA

Now we were already far to the west; the force of circumstances had forced us to leave behind us step by step ever larger areas of unknown country to the north. I was vexed, but I would, at any rate, endeavour to do all that was possible in my hampered condition. At Shamsang, Ryder's Lahtsang, we were at the place where the actual source streams of the Brahmaputra converged from various directions. I had long determined to push on to the unknown source, unless the Tibetans placed unsurmountable obstacles in my way.

The learned and clear-sighted Colonel Montgomerie had sent Nain Sing in the year 1865 up the valley of the upper Brahmaputra. From our Shamsang the Pundit crossed the Marium-la, and said in his report that the sources of the river were certainly in the huge chain seen in the south, and were fed by its glaciers. He did not, however, go to look for the actual sources, but continued his journey westwards.

The next year, 1866, Thomas Webber made an excursion into Tibetan territory, and his route lay a little to the south of Nain Sing's. On his sketch-map it may be seen that he crossed some of the source streams of the Tsangpo, but of the tract in which the sources are situated he gives no further indication than "Snowy ranges unexplored." And when he

says in his text that here are the sources of the great Brahmaputra, which have their origin in the Gurla glaciers, the confusion is hopeless; for the sources of the river lie 60 miles from Gurla, a mountain which has nothing whatever to do with the Brahmaputra.

The political expedition which, under the command of Rawling in the close of the year 1904, had Gartok for its destination, and the chief result of which was the admirable map of the upper Brahmaputra valley surveyed by Ryder and his assistants, travelled from Shamsang over the Mariumla and north of the Gunchu-tso to Manasarowar. It was therefore of the greatest importance to me to travel to the south of their route through country they had not touched on. They travelled by the same road as Nain Sing, and left the source of the river at a distance of 40 miles to the south. From Ryder's report it might be supposed that he considered the Marium-la to be the cradle of the Brahmaputra; but in a letter I have recently received from him, he states that such is not the case, but that he always recognized that the actual source must lie among the mountains in the south-west, which he has set down on his map from bearings taken of their peaks. Ryder also remarks in his report that the principal headwaters come from there. No other traveller had ever been in this region, and I would on no account miss the opportunity of penetrating to the actual source of the Brahmaputra and fixing its position definitely.

How was this to be done? At Shamsang the source streams meet, and below this point the united river bears the name Martsang-tsangpo. First of all, I must, of course, gauge the quantities of water in the source streams, and if they were nearly equal, we must be content to say that the Brahmaputra has several sources.

With ten men, the boat, and the necessary measuring apparatus, I betook myself first, on July 8, to the point on the southern side of the valley where two streams run together, the Kubi-tsangpo from the south-west and the Chema-yundung from the west. A short day's march farther west the Chema-

yundung receives the Marium-chu, which comes from the Marium-la. First the united stream was gauged and found to discharge 1554 cubic feet of water per second, and immediately after the Chema-yundung, which discharged almost 353 cubic feet. Subtracting this from the volume of the united river, we get 1201 cubic feet as the discharge of the Kubi-tsangpo. This river is then three and a half times as large as the Chema, and it should be remembered that the Chema also receives the water of the Marium-chu, so that its 353 cubic feet represent the united volumes of two tributaries.

When we encamped in the evening with the main caravan in the Umbo district (15,427 feet), where the Chema-yundung and the Marium-chu unite, the rivers were very considerably swollen, and the water, which had been clear in the morning, had become turbid. Therefore only the two measurements taken at the same time were directly comparable, and I will pass over all the subsequent measurements. To arrive at the source we had only to know that the Kubi-tsangpo is far larger than the two others, so we had to follow its course up into the mountains, which none of my predecessors had done. The Tibetans also said that the Kubi was the upper course of the Martsang-tsangpo.

On July 9 we parted from Guffaru and the main caravan, which was to keep to the great highroad and cross the Marium-la to Tokchen, while Robert and I with three Ladakis and three armed Tibetans followed the Kubi-tsangpo up to its source. Our way ran west-south-west. Where we crossed the Chema-yundung, a good distance above the last delta arms of the Marium-chu, the river carried little more than 140 cubic feet of water, and therefore the Kubi-tsangpo, flowing to the south-east of it, is here fully eight times as large. At the ford our Tibetans drove a peg with a white rag into the edge of the bank, and when I asked why, they answered: "That the river may not become tired of carrying its water down the valleys."

At Tok-jonsung, where we bivouacked among some black tents, the Chema looked very large, but its water ran very

slowly. The nomads of the district go up to the Chang-tang in winter. Here also we heard, as on many former occasions, that smallpox was raging frightfully in Purang, and that all the roads leading thither were closed. No country lies so high that the angel of death cannot reach it.

In the night the thermometer fell to 15.4°, but we were at a height of 15,991 feet. The snowy mountains in front of us to the south-west became more distinct. The Chema river meandered with a slow fall, and we left it on the right before we came to our camp in Sheryak.

We ride on July 11 on to the south-west in a strong wind, passing already porous, melting snowdrifts. Solid rock is not to be seen, but all the detritus consists of granite and green schist. We follow a clearly marked nomad path, leading up to the small pass Tso-niti-kargang on the ridge which forms a watershed between the Chema-yundung and the Kubi-tsangpo. The large valley of the latter is below us to the south. The water of the Kubi-tsangpo is very muddy, but on the right bank is a perfectly clear moraine lake. From the south-east the affluent Lung-yung flows out of its deeply cut valley. The view is grand on all sides. From north-west to north-east extends a confused sea of mountains, the crests and ramifications of the Trans-Himalaya, intersected by the northern tributaries of the upper Tsangpo. To the south we have a panorama magnificent and overpowering in its fascinating wildness and whiteness, an irregular chain of huge peaks, sharp, black, and fissured, sometimes pointed like pyramids, sometimes broad and rounded, and behind them we see firn-fields from which the snow slides down to form glaciers among the dark rocks. Prominent in the south is the elevation Ngomo-dingding, and from its glaciers the Kubi-tsangpo derives a considerable part of its water. To the west-south-west lies the Dongdong, another mass with glaciers equally extensive, and to the right of it are heights called Chema-yundung-pu, from which the river of the same name takes its rise, and flows down circuitously to the confluence at Shamsang. To the south-east the position of the Nangsa-la is pointed out to me beyond

the nearest mountains, where the river Gyang-chu, which we came across a few days before, has its source.

We go down among moraines, granite detritus, and boulders. Here three small clear moraine pools, called Tso-niti, lie at different heights. The ground becomes more level, and we pass a *mani*, a rivulet trickling among the rubbish, and a small pond, before we reach camp 200 in Lhayak, on the bank of the Kubi-tsangpo, where the pasturage is excellent and we find numerous traces of nomad camps. In several places we come across large sheets of fine thin birch bark, which have been detached by storms and carried by the wind over the mountains from the south.

Our three musketeers told us that all the nomads now sojourning in the Shamsang district would come up here in a few weeks to stay a month and a half, till the snow drove them away again. In winter the snow lies 5 feet deep, and many men and animals perish in the snowdrifts, when the herds go too high up the mountains and are surprised by early heavy falls of snow. The autumn before, I was told, 23 yaks were grazing up at the foot of Ngomo-dingding when it began to snow furiously. Several herdsmen hurried up to drive the animals down to lower ground, but the snow was heaped up in such large quantities that they had to turn back lest they should perish themselves. In the spring they went up, and found the skeletons and hides of the unfortunate animals. The Shamsang Gova had lately lost some horses in the same way. Even the wild asses cannot escape from the spring snow. They cannot run when the snow is deep, and after trying in vain to reach bare ground, they die of starvation and are frozen in the snowdrifts. Our three guides, who themselves pass the summer up here, assured me that the wild asses are frozen in an upright position, and often stand on all fours when the summer sun has thawed the snow. They had seen dead wild asses standing in herds as though they were alive.

The snow, which falls in winter on the source region of the Brahmaputra, melts in spring, and together with the river ice produces a flood of far larger volume, it is said, than the

summer flood produced by rain. This is probably true of the uppermost course of the Tsangpo, but lower down the rain-flood is certainly the greater. In general, the variations in the water-level are more marked in the higher lands, and the further the water flows downstream the more the fluctuations tend to disappear.

"Is not our country hard and terrible to live in? Is not the Bombo Chimbo's country (India) better?" asked my Tibetans.

"I cannot say that; in India there are tigers, snakes, poisonous insects, heat, fever, and plague to contend with, which are not met with up here in the fresh air."

"Yes, but that is better than the continual wind, the sharp cold, and the fruitless waiting for rain. This year we have only had a couple of light showers, and we shall lose our herds if more rain does not come."

"Well, the summer in Tibet is very pleasant when it rains, while in India it is suffocating; on the other hand, the winter in Tibet is severe and cruel, but comfortable in India."

"Tell us, Bombo Chimbo, is it you, with your glass and measuring instruments, that is keeping back the rain this year? At this season it usually rains heavily, but you perhaps prefer clear weather, to be able to see the country and that the roads may not be soft."

"No, I long for rain as much as you, for my animals are getting thin, and cannot eat their fill of this poor grass, which has stood here since last summer. Only the gods can control the weather, and the sons of men must take the rain and sunshine as they are sent to them from above."

They looked at one another doubtfully. It was not the first time that they had ascribed to me powers as great as those of their own gods, and it would have been difficult to have convinced them of their error.

At midnight the men heard a one-year-old child crying and calling for help on the bank of the Kubi-tsangpo. They woke one another in astonishment, and Rabsang and two Tibetans went off with a gun, thinking that it was a ghost. When they

came near they heard the child weeping quite distinctly, and our heroes were so frightened that they thought it safest to make all haste back again. When I asked them how they knew that it was a year-old child, they answered, that from the sound it could not have been younger or older. When I suggested that it might have been a wolf cub, as there were no human beings in the neighbourhood, they declared that it must have been an uneasy spirit wandering about the bank.

There must have been something supernatural about, for I dreamed in the night that all the fragments of birch bark which we had seen on our day's ride were letters of invitation from the Maharaja of Nepal, that I had accepted the invitation, and was lying half asleep on a soft carpet of grass and listening to the rustle of the warm wind among the cedars of the Himalayas. The dream was so vivid that I could not think all day long of anything else but the warm beautiful land behind the mountains.

Even in camp No. 200 I perceived fairly clearly how the land lay, but we were not yet at the actual source, and therefore we continued our march south-westwards on July 12. The foot of the snowy mountains seemed quite near. The river is broad, and divided by islands of mud into several arms. On the left side of the valley, where we march, are a couple of walls of green and black schist, but elsewhere old moraines extend on all sides. We cross a stream flowing from the country below Dongdong to join the Kubi-tsangpo. The Tsechung-tso is a small moraine lake. The valley bottom rises slowly, and consists of loose material sparsely covered with grass. Occasionally a small erratic block of grey granite is seen. Rags, dung, and fragments of bone lie on the summer camping-grounds. At length the river becomes as broad as a small lake, enclosed in morainic rubbish and drift-sand.

We camped at the stone wall of Shapka, one of the head-quarters of the nomads. Here, on the right bank of the Kubi-tsangpo, stands a dark purple ridge of medium height with patches of snow, which melt in the course of the summer.

The land at the foot of this colossal mountain is remarkably flat, and instead of a cone of detritus there is a stream expanded into a lake. The water from the melting snow has washed away all solid matter.

As we came to camp No. 201, at a height of 15,883 feet, the peaks disappeared in clouds, but just before sunset the sky cleared and the last clouds floated away like light white steam over the glaciers of Ngomo-dingding, which clearly displayed their grand structure, with high lateral moraines and concentric rings of grey lumpy terminal moraines. The surface, except where here and there blue crevasses yawned in the ice, was white with snow and the porous melting crust.

When the sun had set, nine peaks in a line from south-east to south-west stood out with remarkable sharpness. Raven-black pinnacles, cliffs and ridges rise out of the white snow-fields, and the glaciers emerge from colossal portals. A whole village of tents rising to heaven! The source of the Brahmaputra could not be embellished with a grander and more magnificent background. Holy and thrice holy are these mountains, which from their cold lap give birth and sustenance to the river celebrated from time immemorial in legend and song, the river of Tibet and Assam, the river *par excellence*, the son of Brahma. One generation after another of black Tibetans has in the course of thousands of years listened to its roar between the two loftiest mountain systems of the world, the Himalaya and the Trans-Himalaya, and one generation after another of the various tribes of Assam has watered its fields with its life-giving floods and drunk of its blessed water. But where the source lay no one knew. Three expeditions had determined its position approximately, but none had been there. No geography had been able to tell us anything of the country round the source of the Brahmaputra. Only a small number of nomads repair thither yearly to spend a couple of short summer months. Here it is, here in the front of three glacier tongues, that the river so revered by the Hindu tribes begins its course of some 1800 miles through the grandest elevations of the world, from which its turbid volumes

of water roll first to the east, then southwards, cutting a wild valley through the Himalayas, and finally flowing south-westwards over the plains of Assam. The upper Brahmaputra, the Tsangpo, is truly the chief artery of Tibet, for within its drainage basin is concentrated the great mass of its population, while its lower course is surrounded by the most fruitful and populous provinces of Assam. The Brahmaputra is therefore one of the noblest rivers of the world, and few waterways have a more illustrious descent and a more varied and more glorious career, for nations have grown up on its banks and have lived there, and their history and culture have been intimately connected with it since the earliest times of human records.

Busied with such thoughts, I went out again in the evening to gaze at the cliffs of the nine peaks which showed like dim misty shadows, while the ice and snow fields below, of the same colour as the sky, were not perceptible in the night. Then a flash of lightning blazed up behind Kubi-gangri, as the whole massive is called, and the crest crowned with eternal snow stood suddenly out in sharp pitch-black contours. Singular, entrancing land, where spirit voices are heard in the night and the sky blazes up in bluish light. I listened for a long time to the brook Shapka-chu, gently trickling down its stony bed to the bank of the Kubi-tsangpo.

We had still some way to go before we came to the actual source, and I could not conscientiously leave Kubi-gangri without determining the absolute height of the source by the boiling-point thermometer. Our Tibetans were exceedingly friendly, and seemed to take an interest in showing us this point, of which I had spoken so often during the past days and about which I had put so many questions. I was really thankful for, and overjoyed at, this unexpected favourable opportunity of fixing the position of the source, though I knew that my excursion to Kubi-gangri could only be a very cursory and defective reconnaissance. A thorough exploration of this neighbourhood would require several years, for the summer up here is short and the time for work is over in two months.

But though I succeeded in learning only the chief outlines of the physical geography, I can count this excursion as one of the most important events of my last journey in Tibet. Accordingly, we decided to ride up to the source next day, July 13. Only, Rabsang, Robert, and a Tibetan were to accompany me. The rest were to wait for our return under the command of Tsering.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE SOURCE OF THE SACRED RIVER—A DEPARTURE

We started off in beautiful weather, not a cloud hanging over the summits of Kubi-gangri. We followed the left bank of the Kubi-tsangpo, and rode along the foot of the huge moraines, which here rise fully 470 feet above the valley bottom, and which were formerly thrown up on the left or western side of the gigantic glacier, whence proceeded all the glacier tongues now remaining only in short lengths. The morainic character is plainly recognizable, sometimes in curved ridges and walls falling steeply on both sides, sometimes in rounded hillocks rising one above another. The surface is often covered with fine pebbles, grass, and lovely alpine flowers trying to make the most of the short summer. Here and there a landslip has taken place, and then it can be seen that the rock shows no trace of stratification. Occasionally we pass granite boulders, but they are small, the largest not more than 280 cubic feet. On the valley bottom are swamps with rank grass, and wild geese are enjoying the summer in the ponds. We twice met with fresh spoor of small herds of wild yaks which had moved off to the right bank of the Kubi-tsangpo. The horses' hoofs splashed in the swampy ground, seldom varied by small patches of boulder clay.

Numerous rivulets descend from the moraines. They are fed by the melting snowfields, and therefore, in contrast to the glacier brooks, are crystal clear. They have eroded deep valleys in the moraines, and one of them has deposited a great dejection cone at the mouth, over which the brook falls in ten

channels, carrying 106 cubic feet of water. A very considerable proportion of the upper Brahmaputra's water is derived from melted snow. Rivulets rushed and spurted all about in the rubbish, and all came from the snowfields, which struggled in vain against the heat of the spring sun.

Now we have right in front of us the immense glacier which descends from an extensive firn basin on the western foot of the Mukchung-simo massive. Between its terminal moraines and the older moraines we have skirted, a rather voluminous stream has eroded its valley. Its water is tolerably clear and green, so that it proceeds from snow fields. A little below the terminal moraine it unites with the numerous arms of the muddy glacier stream, of which the largest is the one which flows nearest to the foot of the Mukchung massive. Even 200 yards below the confluence the green water can be clearly distinguished from the brown, but afterwards the cold currents intermingle. Where the river, still divided into a number of meandering arms, turns past camp 201 to the north-east, it receives considerable additions from the glaciers lying farther east, and thus the Kubi-tsangpo is formed.

Then we ride up, zigzagging among boulders and pebble beds, over ridges, banks, and erosion furrows, over brooks and treacherous bog, over grass and clumps of brushwood, to a commanding point of view on the top of the old moraine (16,453 feet). Before us is a chaos of huge, precipitous, fissured, black, bare rocks, summits, pyramids, columns, domes, and ridges, moraines, tongues of ice, snow and firn fields—a scene hard to beat for wild grandeur.

Here we made a halt, and I drew the panorama while the horses grazed on the slopes. The largest glacier, which comes from the Kubi-gangri Upper, is entirely below us, and we have a bird's-eye view of it. It is fed by three different firn-fields, and has two distinct medial moraines, which here and there rise into ridges where the ice has been thrust aside. The right lateral moraine is well defined, and is still partially covered with snow. The left is broad in its upper part but narrow below, where the green stream washes its base. Up above, a

glacier from the west runs into the main glacier, and where the two join the side glacier is thrown up into a mighty wall, which merges into the left lateral moraine of the other. All the bottom of the glacier front is buried in rubbish, and the ice peeps out only here and there. Here are several small sheets of water, some of an intensely blue colour, others brown, with finely pulverized matter, showing that they are connected with the water of the ground moraine. Two of these small pools have vertical sides of blue ice like entrances to marvellous fairy grottos. A series of marginal crevasses are still partly covered with snow. The terminal moraine is a chaos of mounds, pebbles, and boulders, with patches of snow on the shady side. In a hollow between these hillocks flows the middle glacier stream, after passing two pools. The terminal moraine does not increase in size, for its material is slowly disintegrated and washed away by the stream, which winds in several arms over the even bed of the valley bottom just below in the most capricious curves.

An excursion over the surface of the glacier would not be difficult when one was once up on it. There are many dangerous crevasses concealed under the snow which may be avoided by keeping to the rubbish heaps of the medial moraines. The mass of the Kubi-gangri, which from our point of view lies farthest to the right, to the west-north-west, is called Gave-ting; from it descends the great side glacier.

The front of the main glacier, where the largest of all the glacier streams of the Kubi-gangri rises, is the actual source of the Brahmaputra. The other streams which enter it south-east of camp 201 are smaller and shorter. We could not get to them, for the horses sank too deep in the sand and mud of the main stream.

On our return we made a halt at the place where the principal branch of the Kubi-tsangpo comes out from under the ice, and I found that the source of the Brahmaputra lies at an altitude of 15,958 feet above sea-level. I must leave details for the scientific report of this journey, which will be published in due time.

On July 14 it seemed very hot in my tent, for even at seven o'clock in the morning the temperature was 45.1°; in the night there had been nearly 14½ degrees of frost. The sky was perfectly clear, and therefore I could not refrain from seeking another point of view to investigate the beautiful glaciers of the Kubi-gangri.

After arranging with Tsering that he should meet us in the valley of the Dongdong river we rode up the banks and ridges of the old moraine, through its hollows and over its terraces of barren soil, which was now soft and treacherous from the melting of the snow, past pools of clear, green water, and to the highest point of its ridge, where there was nothing to hide the view.

I first took nine photographs, forming a consecutive series. Then a cloak was thrown over the stand to make a shelter against the strong wind, and in this sentry-box I sat for nearly four hours drawing a panorama which embraced the whole horizon. Meanwhile my companions lay down and snored, and I was glad to sit alone face to face with these royal mountain giants. The whole architecture is fantastically wild, and the only law which is strictly observed is that each glacier is confined between two huge black crests of rock.

In order to give the reader a notion of the scene I here describe a part of the panorama embracing the Kubi-gangri. To the south, 27° E., is a tetrahedral peak, which our guide called Ngoma-dingding. To the south, 11° E., rises another summit, of almost precisely the same form, which is called Absi. On the east of it lies the Ngoma-dingding glacier, and on the west the Absi glacier. West of this stands the lumpy Mukchung-simo group, with its culminating point lying south, 24° W. The northern side resembles a stable with straight short stalls, each containing a small hanging glacier. To the south-west rise two sharp pinnacles, and in the south, 57° W., a couple of dome-shaped summits consisting only of ice and snow; they belong to the Langta-chen massive, and their firns feed to a great extent the glacier in the front of which the Brahmaputra takes its rise. So the glacier may be

called the Langta-chen. To the south, 70° W., 88° W., and north, 83° W., rise the summits of the Gave-ting group. To the north, 55° W., three peaks of the Dongdong appear, from which one of the sources of the Brahmaputra takes its rise, quite insignificant compared to the Kubi-tsangpo.

Towards the north-east the sharply defined valley of the Kubi-tsangpo runs downwards, and in the distance are seen the mountains of Chang-tang, pyramidal peaks of singular uniformity, and crowded together in great numbers, which form a finely jagged horizon, and in consequence of the great distance merge into the pink tint of the insignificant snowfields. The Trans-Himalaya seems on this side to widen out and become flatter than in the east.

It was late when we rode down the steep path to the camp on the Dongdong. And now we had to hurry westwards and make as many discoveries and collect as much information as possible on forbidden paths, in spite of the Mandarins and the Devashung.

On July 15 we left our former route to the right and directed our steps northwards over intricate moraines, seeing the snowy peaks of Dongdong and Chema-yundung still more clearly from the pass Kargan-la. On the 16th the sky was overcast, a couple of hail showers fell, and the hills around us changed to white. We rode north-westwards past two small lakes, and again fell in with solid rock—green and black schist. From the Tugri-la we had a fine view over a world of mountains, the names of which I have no time to record. We crossed another saddle, Sen-kamba-la, to reach the broad open valley of the Chema-yundung river, which descends from a very extensive glacier in the south belonging to the Chema-yundung-pu massive. Here were several nomad tents, and seven tents inhabited by pilgrims from Bongba stood on a rise. They were on their way with kith and kin to Kang-rinpoche to make the pilgrimage round the holy mountain. Most of the pilgrims from the far east take this southern route and return over the Marium-la.

July 17. It was very hot in the saddle with a temperature of 50° and quite calm air. The brown puppy was very tired of

travelling, and drops fell from her hanging tongue, but she could not leave the antelopes and hares in peace. She darted after them full speed, but never caught them, and came back to me disappointed, but began again the useless pursuit. The Ronggak-chu is an affluent of the Chema, and comes from the north-west. We left the little double lake Kuru-chok in the south. To the west-south-west is the place where the Chema-yundung receives the Angsi-chu, the most westerly of all the headwaters of the Brahmaputra.

In the valley of the Tynchung we encamped beside some accommodating nomads, who quickly procured me fresh yaks, for the three musketeers turned back here to Shamsang, after doing their work well. The whole excursion to the sources of the Brahmaputra had cost 110 rupees, and it was well worth more. The natives said that ten robbers had recently made the neighbourhood unsafe, but immediately it was reported that a European caravan was approaching Tynchung, they had entirely disappeared, and therefore we were regarded as deliverers, and the people could not do too much for us. A Hindu merchant from Almora was camping here, buying sheep's wool and salt from the nomads, and selling them frieze rugs and textiles from Agra and Amritsar.

Next day we crossed the Marnyak-la (17,395 feet), and had the Angsi-chu immediately below us, and on the 19th we left the river behind and followed its small tributary, the Loang-gonga, up to its source at the very low pass Tamlung or Tag-la, which is nothing more than a rise in an open longitudinal valley. But this pass is exceedingly important, for it is the watershed between the Brahmaputra and Manasarowar. Its height is 17,382 feet. To the south is spread out a succession of snowy peaks, and to the west-south-west is seen Gurla Mandatta or Memo-nani, a majestic and imposing group which belongs to the same Himalayan range as Kubi-gangri. The pass is situated among old moraines, where is the little insignificant lake Tamlung-tso, from which the Loang-gonga flows out. At some distance to the south is seen the low watershed between the Angsi-chu and the Gang-lung, a stream

that comes from a massive of the same name, and, as the Tage-tsangpo, falls into Manasarowar. The very latest maps of western Tibet give a very incorrect representation of this country, which has never been visited by a European before. Instead of a clearly marked meridional range we found an open, hilly, longitudinal valley with the watershed running among its moraines. Here we took leave of the Brahmaputra, after passing half a year in its basin since crossing the Sela-la. We encamped at a place where the Gang-lung river breaks through a rampart of moraines, forming foaming cascades.

During the following day's journey it flows through granitic moraines, drift sand, and morasses, and becomes a considerable stream, receiving numerous affluents from the south. A caravan of 50 yaks, and eight men from Purang, armed with guns and clad in blue with fur-lined cloaks, were on the way to the fair in Gyanima. In the district Tagramoche, where we bivouacked, were many nomads and beggars with staves and bundles on the way to the holy mountain. We also met six merchants from Ladak, who were carrying dried peaches for sale on 45 asses. They had left home a month and a half previously.

On July 21 we rode down the Tage-bup valley among savage cliffs. On its bottom flows the Tage-tsangpo, changing its colour from light green over sandy ground to bluish purple over dark detritus. Langchen-kamba is a small side-valley on the right, from which robbers are wont to sally forth against defenceless travellers. Just below the valley a spring bubbles forth with crystal-clear water at a temperature of 38°. It is considered holy, and is marked by a pole bedecked with rags and streamers like a scare-crow. This spring is also called Langchen-kamba.

A little farther down the spring Chakko stands on a steep slope on the right bank, and its water (40.3°) is collected in a round pit 3 feet deep. A wall is erected about it, covered with flat stones, on which figures of Buddha and holy texts are carved. Leaves from the holy scriptures are thrust between the stones of the wall, and streamers and rags fly from a pole.

Through the water, clear as a mirror, could be seen blue and red beads, two inferior turquoises, some shells, and other trash, thrown in as offerings by pious pilgrims. The water is supposed to have miraculous powers. Murmuring prayers, our guide filled a wooden bowl with water and poured it over the head and mane of his horse to protect it from wolves. With the same object he tied a rag from the pole on to his horse's forelock. He drank himself a good draught to render him invulnerable to the bullets of robbers. If a sheep or other animal is ill it is only necessary to sprinkle it with the holy water to make it well again. When a traveller or pilgrim stands at the well and pours water with both hands over his head, it guards him against falling into the hands of foot-pads, and from other misfortunes. And if he sits and meditates, drinks, and washes his head, hands, and legs, and has sufficient faith, then he finds gold coins and precious stones at the bottom of the well. The sick man who bathes his whole body in the miraculous water becomes strong again. It is a Lourdes in miniature. While my men were engaged in their ablutions I sat at the edge of the well and listened to the mystical music of the fluttering prayer-streamers, and found this fascinating Tibet more enigmatical at every step.

Then we rode over the Tage-tsangpo, where its valley opens into the flat basin of Manasarowar—a new chapter in the chronicles of our journey. Again Gurla Mandatta showed itself in all its glory, and in the north-west Kang-rinpoche or Kailas, the holy mountain, like a great *chhorten* on a lama's grave, rose above the jagged ridge which forms the horizon in that direction. On seeing it all our men suddenly jumped out of their saddles and threw themselves down with their foreheads on the ground. Only Rabsang, a confirmed heathen, remained seated on his horse, and was afterwards well scolded by Tsering.

We are now out on open hilly ground, and see a glimpse of the holy lake Tso-mavang or Manasarowar. We encamp by a small lake called Tso-nyak, whither come Islam Ahun and Shukkur Ali, sent by Guffaru, who is become uneasy at our

long absence. We send them back again to Tokchen with orders to Guffaru to proceed to the monastery Serolung-gompa on the holy lake, where we will meet him.

On July 22 we rode over the Tage-tsangpo, which here carried 291 cubic feet of water, where Rabsang got a thorough wetting in consequence of his horse coming a cropper among the boulders in the bed. Tsering said that he deserved a dip because he had not saluted Kang-rinpoche. Camp 210 was set up in the broad valley Namarding, where a clear brook flows to the Tage-tsangpo. The wind blew strongly, and the Tibetans said that the waves on Tso-mavang were as high and dark as nomad tents. Should we venture in our little canvas boat on the lake, exposed to all the winds? It must be very rough before I consented to give up the trip, for the lake had long been the subject of my dreams.

Next morning Tundup Sonam appeared with the news that the Gova of Tokchen would not let his yaks on hire for the journey to Serolung. I had therefore to ride to Tokchen by a road over the pass Karbu-la, and down the river Samo-tsangpo; it is full of fish, but we were asked not to disturb them, for they came up from the holy lake. We were all together again in Tokchen, and I found the Gova a decent fellow, who welcomed me with a large *kadakh* and a bowl of *tsamba*.

Now an hour of parting was come, for I sent from Tokchen thirteen of my men home to Ladak. I had several reasons for this. I did not need so many men in western Tibet; twelve were enough, and a small, light caravan accomplishes more and does not excite so much notice. The men were to travel along the great highway to Gartok under the experienced leadership of Guffaru, and there deposit all the baggage I could spare with the British agent, Thakur Jai Chand. I also sent to him a letter packet of three hundred pages to my parents, beside other correspondence. Of particular importance was a letter to Colonel Dunlop Smith, in which I asked for 6000 rupees, provisions, books, revolvers and ammunition, and things suitable for presents, such as gold and silver watches, as well

as all the letters which must have accumulated at the Viceregal Lodge.

On the first evening, when I called together all the twenty-five men and told them my decision to send away thirteen, and asked which of them wished to go home, no one answered. They declared that they would follow me until I was tired of Tibet. Then I picked out thirteen and retained the best twelve men. Among these was Tashi, who with Tundup Sonam had accomplished the adventurous journey to Shigatse. But when he saw that I was in earnest about the dividing of the caravan, he begged me to let him go home, so he was exchanged for another man.

We stayed here two days to put everything in order. After the baggage was re-arranged I had only four boxes left, and the rest were to be carried away by Guffaru. Robert sat in my tent like a money-changer and piled up sovereigns and rupees in small heaps, the pay, gratuities, and travelling expenses of the men who were going home. Our treasury was relieved of 2118 rupees all at once. The important correspondence was enclosed in a case, which Guffaru carried in his belt. The men with him were allowed to keep two of our five guns. Late in the evening Guffaru came to my tent to receive his last instructions. Honest old Guffaru, he had in the autumn of his life performed wonders in the winter in Chang-tang, always composed and contented, always doing his duty in the smallest particular. Now he sat, with the tears falling on to his white beard, and thanked me for all I had done for him during the past year. I bade him weep no more but rejoice that the hard time was over for him, and that he could return safe and sound to his people with 400 rupees in his purse. When we left Leh he was as poor as a church mouse, and now he was a rich man for his position, and he had not needed his shroud. I told him that I should miss him very much, but that I could not entrust the valuable baggage and important letters to any other hands but his.

When I came out of my tent early on the morning of the 26th the 13 yaks were laden and the thirteen men were ready

to march off with their Tibetan guides. I thanked them for their faithfulness and patience during the time when they were exposed to so many dangers in my service, begged them to remember that they were responsible for the caravan on the way home, and told them that they must obey Guffaru, and that their character would suffer if they did not bear with one another on the way. If they were as conscientious on this journey as in my service, it would be well for them in the future, and perhaps our paths might cross again.

Then old Guffaru came forward, and fell on his knees before me, weeping loudly, and all the others in turn followed his example amid sobs and tears; I clapped them all on the shoulder and hoped that this bitter hour would soon be over. Then they took leave of their comrades, who, deeply moved, sent greetings to their parents, wives, and children in Ladak, and they marched off on foot, as they had travelled so many hundred miles, silent, drooping, and downcast, and soon disappeared behind the hills.

CHAPTER XLIV

A NIGHT ON MANASAROWAR

AFTER Guffaru had set out with his men, the small caravan was organized which was to accompany me. It was led by Tsering, and the other men left were Bulu, Tundup Sonam, Rabsang, Rehim Ali, Shukkur Ali, Namgyal, Adul, Ishe, Lama, Galsang, and Rub Das. The Gova of Tokchen was given a Kashmir shawl, a turban, and some rupees for the services he had rendered us, and all the other Tibetans who had been friendly and helpful received presents. The dividing of the caravan had also the advantage that the Tibetans supposed that we were all making for the same destination by different routes, and that I should join Guffaru in Gartok and continue my journey to Ladak, as directed on the passport.

With Robert, Rabsang, and two Tibetans I now ride down the Tokchen valley and up over the hills to the south-west. To the right of our route the turquoise-blue surface of the holy lake is displayed; how beautiful, how fascinating is the scene! One seems to breathe more freely and easily, one feels a pleasure in life, one longs to voyage over the blue depths and the sacred waves. For Manasarowar is the holiest and most famous of all the lakes of the world, the goal of the pilgrimage of innumerable pious Hindus, a lake celebrated in the most ancient religious hymns and songs, and in its clear waters the ashes of Hindus find a grave as desirable and honoured as in the turbid waters of the Ganges. During my stay in India I received letters from Hindus in which they asked me to explore the revered lake and the holy mountain Kailas, which lifts its

summit in the north under a cupola of eternal snow, where Siva, one of the Indian Trinity, dwells in her paradise among a host of other deities; and they told me that if I could give them an exact description of the lake and river, they would remember me in their prayers and their gods would bless me. But that was not why I longed to be there. The lake had never been sounded—I would sink my lead to the bottom and make a map of its bed; I would follow its periphery and calculate how much water pours into its bosom on a summer day; I would investigate its hydrographic relation to the adjacent lake on the west, the Rakas-tal, a problem which various travellers in this region, from Moorcroft and Strachey to Ryder and Rawling, have explained differently; I would learn something of the monasteries and the life of Hindu and Tibetan pilgrims, for the lake is sacred in the eyes of Lamaists also, who call it Tso-mavang or Tso-rinpoche, the "Holy Lake." How can Manasarowar and Kailas be the objects of divine honours from two religions so different as Hinduism and Lamaism unless it is that their overpowering beauty has appealed to and deeply impressed the human mind, and that they seemed to belong rather to heaven than to earth? Even the first view from the hills on the shore caused us to burst into tears of joy at the wonderful, magnificent landscape and its surpassing beauty. The oval lake, somewhat narrower in the south than the north, and with a diameter of about 15½ miles, lies like an enormous turquoise embedded between two of the finest and most famous mountain giants of the world, the Kailas in the north and Gurla Mandatta in the south, and between huge ranges, above which the two mountains uplift their crowns of bright white eternal snow. Yes, already I felt the strong fascination which held me fettered to the banks of Manasarowar, and I knew that I would not willingly leave the lake before I had listened until I was weary to the song of its waves.

We sat an hour and enjoyed the incomparable beauty of the scene. A slight ripple ruffled the surface of the water, but in the middle the lake was as smooth as if oil had been poured on it. The Tibetans said that it was always smooth in the

middle except when a storm raged. To the south-south-west and south-west are seen the two summits of Gurla Mandatta, the western very flat, and reminding me of the Mustag-ata in the eastern Pamir. The Tibetans called the mountain sometimes Namo, sometimes Memo-nani. South, 60° W., a row of snowy heights rise behind the Purang valley. To the west-north-west is seen the small pyramidal hill where Chiu-gompa stands on the bank of the water channel which once ran into Rakas-tal. To the north-west a couple of lagoons lie on the shore of Manasarowar, and behind them rise chains and ramifications belonging to the Trans-Himalaya, and among them Kailas or Kang-rinpoche, the "Holy Mountain," called also Gangri or the "Ice Mountain," dominates the horizon unless its summit is veiled in clouds. And lastly, to the north, 20° W., we see the double-peaked Pundi, not far from the shore, and in the north the two valleys Pachen and Pachung, with roads which lead over the watershed of the Trans-Himalaya to Chang-tang.

When I asked our guides what they thought of a boat trip across the lake, they answered unhesitatingly that it was impossible; mortals who ventured on the lake, which was the home of the gods, must perish. Also in the middle Tso-mavang was not level as on the shore, but formed a transparent dome, and up its round arch no boat could mount; and even if we succeeded in getting the boat up, it would shoot down the other side with such velocity that it must capsize, and we should perish in the waves because we had excited the wrath of the god of the lake.

We mounted again and rode south-south-west over the hills to Serolung, the golden valley, where the monastery Serolung-gompa is hidden in the hollow. There I stayed four hours, making sketches and notes. Serolung, which contains thirty monks, most of whom were away wandering among the villages, is one of the eight convents which are set like precious stones in the chain which the pilgrims stretch round the lake, in the hope of acquiring merit in a future form of existence, of being freed from the burden of sin and the tortures of

purgatorial fires, nay, perhaps, of sitting at the feet of the gods and eating *tsamba* out of golden bowls.

Our camp No. 212 was pitched immediately south of the mouth of the Serolung valley at the water's edge. The strip of ground on the bank is quite narrow, and on the hills rising to the east of it are visible six horizontal strand lines, the highest lying 162 feet above the present level of the lake, which is 15,098 feet above the sea.

On July 27 I had a good sleep, and spent the rest of the day in making preparations for the first line of soundings, which was to cross the lake in a direction south, 59° W., where a gap appeared in the hills framing the lake. We waited for good weather, but the wind blew violently and the surf beat and foamed against the shore. I therefore resolved to wait till night, for of late the nights had been calmer than the days. On a trial trip we had found a depth of 130 feet not far from the shore, so we made ready a sounding-line 490 feet long. Perhaps even this would not be long enough, for a lake lying among such high mountains is sure to be deep. Shukkur Ali was to go with me, and he accepted his fate with his usual composure, but Rehim Ali, the other victim, was frightened; it was all very well in the day, he said, but in the dark gloomy night on such a great lake! We should certainly have the same trouble as on Lake Lighten, he thought.

When the sun set the wind increased in strength, and heavy clouds spread up from the south-west. At seven o'clock it was pitch dark all round, not a star shone out, not a trace was visible of the outline of the shore and of the snowy mountains, and the sea was buried in the shades of night. But an hour later the wind fell, the air became quite calm, but the waves beat in a monotonous rhythm on the bank. The smoke of the camp fires rose straight up into the air.

Then I gave orders to set out. The baggage was stowed and the mast stepped to be ready if we had a favourable wind. Provisions for two days were put in the boat. I wore a leathern vest, Kashmir boots, and an Indian helmet, and sat on a cushion and a folded fur coat on the lee side of the

rudder, on the other side of which the sounding-line with its knots lay ready on the gunwale. The log, Lyth's current meter, was attached to the boat to register the whole length of the course, and compass, watch, note-book, and map sheets all lay close beside me, lighted by a Chinese paper lantern, which could be covered with a towel when we did not want the light. I used the towel after every sounding to dry my hands. Rehim Ali took his seat forward, Shukkur Ali in the stern half of the boat, where we were cramped for room and had to take care that we did not get entangled in the sounding-line.

Tsering took a sceptical view of the whole adventure. He said that the lake was full of wonders, and at the best we should be driven back by mysterious powers when we had rowed a little way out. And a Tibetan agreed with him, saying that we should never reach the western shore though we rowed with all our might, for the lake god would hold our boat fast, and while we thought that it was advancing it would really remain on the same spot, and finally the angry god would draw it down to the bottom.

Robert had orders to wait at camp No. 212 for our return, and when we put off from the bank at nine o'clock all bade us farewell in as warm and gentle a tone as though they thought that they had seen the last of us. Their spirits were not raised by the lightning which flashed in the south and might portend a storm. The darkness, however, was not so intense, for the moon was coming up, though it was still covered by the hills rising behind our camp. But its light threw a weird gleam over the lake, and in the south Gurla Mandatta rose like a ghost enveloped in a sheet of moonshine, snowfields, and glaciers.

At my command, the boatmen took a firm grip of the oars and the boat glided out from the beach, where our men stood in a silent thoughtful group. Our fires were seen for awhile, but soon disappeared, for they were burning almost on a level with the water. Robert told me afterwards that the little boat sailing out into the darkness was a curious sight; owing to the lantern and the reflexion of the light on the mast the boat was

visible at first, but when it reached the moon-lighted part of the lake it appeared only as a small black spot, which soon vanished.

The great lake was dark and mysterious in the night, and unknown depths lurked beneath us. The contours of the hills on the shore were still visible behind us, but we had not gone far before they were swallowed up by higher mountains farther off, which gradually came into view. After twenty minutes' rowing we stopped and let down the line, sounding 135 feet. The roar of the surf on the beach was the only sound in the silence of night, except the splash of the oars and the voices of the oarsmen singing in time with their strokes. At the next sounding the depth was 141 feet. If the bottom did not fall more rapidly our line would be long enough. Every hour I recorded the temperatures of the air and the water. Now the god of sleep paid us a visit; Shukkur Ali yawned at every ninth stroke, and every yawn was so long that it lasted three strokes.

The air is quite still. A long, smooth swell causes the boat to rock slightly. All is quiet, and I ask myself involuntarily if other beings are listening to the splash of the oars as well as ourselves. It is warm, with a temperature of 46.9° at eleven o'clock. The next two depths are 143 and 164 feet. My oarsmen follow the soundings with deep interest, and look forward to the point where the depth will begin to decrease. They think it awful and uncanny to glide over such great depths in the dark night. Again blue lightning flashes behind Gurla Mandatta, which stands forth in a pitch-black outline, after appearing just before in a white robe of moon-lighted snowfields. A little later all the southern sky flames up like a sea of fire; the flashes quickly follow one after the other, and shoot up to the zenith, seeming to stay a moment behind the mountains, and it becomes light as day, but when the glow dies out the darkness is more intense, and the sublime, poetic solemnity of the night is enhanced. By the light of the flashes I can see the faces of the two men, who are startled and uneasy, and do not dare to disturb the awful stillness by their singing.

When I let down the line at the fifth point, the two men

asked permission to light their water-pipes. The depth was 181 feet. A slight south-westerly breeze rippled the surface. The cry of a water-bird broke shrilly on the silence of the night, and made us feel less lonely. A slight hiss of the surf breaking on the south-eastern shore was audible. In the south the clouds gathered round the summit of Gurla Mandatta, the breeze fell. We glided slowly over the inky-black water, and between the wave crests the path of moonlight wound in bright sinuosities; the depth increased slowly—183.4 feet, 189.3, 192 and 212.6. The temperature was still 45.9°, and I did not want my fur coat.

The queen of night, with diamonds in her dark hair, looks down upon the holy lake. The midnight hour is passed, and the early morning hours creep slowly on. We sound 203, 200, 184, 184, 180, and 190 feet, and it seems therefore as if we had passed the deepest depression. Leaning on the gunwale I enjoy the voyage to the full; for nothing I remember in my long wanderings in Asia can compare with the overpowering beauty of this nocturnal sail. I seem to hear the gentle but powerful beat of the great heart of Nature, its pulsation growing weaker in the arms of night, and gaining fresh vigour in the glow of the morning red. The scene, gradually changing as the hours go by, seems to belong not to earth but to the outermost boundary of unattainable space, as though it lay much nearer heaven, the misty fairyland of dreams and imagination, of hope and yearning, than to the earth with its mortals, its cares, its sins, and its vanity. The moon describes its arch in the sky, its restless reflexion quivering on the water, and broken by the wake of the boat.

The queen of night and her robe become paler. The dark sky passes into light blue, and the morn draws nigh from the east. There is a faint dawn over the eastern mountains, and soon their outlines stand out sharply, as though cut out on black paper. The clouds, but now floating white over the lake, assume a faint rosy hue, which gradually grows stronger, and is reflected on the smooth water, calling forth a garden of fresh roses. We row among floating rose-beds, there is an

odour of morning and pure water in the air, it grows lighter, the landscape regains its colour, and the new day, July 28, begins its triumphal progress over the earth. Only an inspired pencil and magic colours could depict the scene that met my eyes when the whole country lay in shadow, and only the highest peaks of Gurla Mandatta caught the first gleam of the rising sun. In the growing light of dawn the mountain, with its snowfields and glaciers, had shown silvery white and cold; but now! In a moment the extreme points of the summit began to glow with purple like liquid gold. And the brilliant illumination crept slowly like a mantle down the flanks of the mountain, and the thin white morning clouds, which hovered over the lower slopes and formed a girdle round a well-defined zone, floating freely like Saturn's ring, and like it throwing a shadow on the fields of eternal snow, these too assumed a tinge of gold and purple, such as no mortal can describe. The colours, at first as light and fleeting as those of a young maiden in her ball-dress, became more pronounced, light concentrated itself on the eastern mountains, and over their sharp outlines a sheaf of bright rays fell from the upper limb of the sun upon the lake. And now day has won the victory, and I try dreamily to decide which spectacle has made the greater impression on me—the quiet moonlight, or the sunrise with its warm, rosy gleam on the eternal snow.

Phenomena like these are fleeting guests on the earth; they come and go in the early morning hours, they are only seen once in a lifetime, they are like a greeting from a better world, a flash from the island of the phœnix. Thousands and thousands of pilgrims have wandered round the lake in the course of centuries, and have seen the dawn and sunset, but have never witnessed the display which we gazed upon from the middle of the holy lake on this memorable night. But soon the magical effects of light and colour, which have quickly followed one another and held me entranced, fade away. The country assumes its usual aspect, and is overshadowed by dense clouds. Kailas and Gurla Mandatta vanish entirely, and only a snowy crest far away to the north-

west is still dyed a deep carmine, only yonder a sheaf of sunbeams penetrates through an opening in the clouds. In that direction the mirror of the lake is tinged blue, but to the south green. The wild geese have wakened up, and they are heard cackling on their joyous flights, and now and then a gull or tern screams. Bundles of seaweed float about. The sky is threatening, but the air is calm, and only gentle swells, smooth as polished metal, disturb the water, which looks like the clearest curação. The boat moves with weary slowness to its destination, for now, at six o'clock in the morning, my oarsmen are tired and sleepy and quite at an end of their strength. They sleep and row alternately. "Hem-mala-hém," calls out Shukkur Ali, accenting the last syllable, when he energetically grasps his oar, but he goes to sleep between, and the oar hovers in the air; his own voice wakens him up, he dips the oar in and goes to sleep again.

The hours pass by, but there is no sign that we are nearing our destination. We cannot decide which bank is nearest, and we seem to be in the centre of this boundless lake. In the midst of Gurla Mandatta is seen a huge deeply eroded ravine, its entrance standing out picturesquely below the dense mantle of clouds. For a moment, when all around lay buried in shadow, the interior was lighted up by the sun, and it presented a fantastic appearance, resembling a portal into a hall of the gigantic dome lighted up by innumerable candles. The valleys and erosion channels between the different spurs of the massive are sharply defined, and wind down to the lake among flat cones of detritus, the outer margins of which cause the variations in the depth of the bottom. This now increases again to 200, 203, 213, and 240 feet. At fourteen points, these included, the bottom temperature is observed. The sounding occupies a considerable time. The line must first be paid out to the 230 feet, and then be held still till the thermometer has assumed the bottom temperature, and then it must be drawn up again, the depth must be noted, the thermometer read, the temperature of the surface water and the air must be ascertained, and the log-reading taken.

Five furlongs to the north the smooth swell shows a curious fiery yellow colour, and I cannot make out the origin of this singular reflexion. The clouds gather in the south-west, and a breeze sweeps over the lake, producing waves which retard still more the progress of the boat. Rehim Ali cannot keep himself awake any longer, and Shukkur Ali is very comical in his overpowering sleepiness. The old man looks like a weather-beaten sea-dog in a south-wester—his Ladaki cap with its spreading flaps. He snoozes innocently with his oars up, and rows again and again in the air, still calling out his constant "Shu-ba-la-la." He talks in his sleep. Rehim Ali wakens up and asks him what is the matter, and no one knows what it is all about. Towards seven o'clock the dustman pays me a visit, but is not admitted. Only for a moment I see red wild asses running over the water, hear harps playing sweetly in the air, and behold the great black head of a sea-serpent rise above the waves and then sink down again; green dolphins and small whales arch their backs among the waves—but no, I must keep awake, for a storm may come down upon us any moment. I give my boatmen a good douche with the hollow of my hand, wash my own hands and face, and order breakfast—a hard-boiled goose egg, a piece of bread, and a bowl of milk, and then I light my pipe and am as lively again as a lark. At the twentieth sounding-place, 259 feet deep, the other two follow my example.

At nine o'clock, when we have been exactly twelve hours on the water, we sound a depth of 268.4 feet, but the south-western shore seems to our eyes as far off as ever. Rehim Ali thinks it is awful to have so much water under the keel. The clouds on Gurla lift a little, and we see deeper into the recesses of the great valley the more we come opposite its mouth. The lower points of the snowfields come into sight below the clouds. West of them is seen a broad erosion channel, grey with detritus and dotted with dark brushwood. The water reflects the forms of the mountains like a mirror; it turns blue when the sky is clear, but green again as soon as the clouds gather. A shoal of fishes plays in the water and splashes on the surface.

And again the hours of the day pass by. We glide slowly

forwards, now over calm rising swell, whispering gently as spirit voices, now over small pyramidal waves produced by the meeting of two systems of undulations from different directions. Four small squalls from different quarters threaten us, but we catch only a flip of their tails, which cannot stir up the waves to a dangerous height. The last, from the south-east, is the strongest, and then the sail is hoisted. But still the shore seems far distant; perhaps Tsering was right with his Lamaistic wisdom.

All details, however, become sharper and clearer. Gurla turns three mighty gables towards the lake, and between them huge fans of detritus and erosion channels come to view. The fans become flatter towards the shore, and extend under the water down to the greatest depths of the lake; on the north shore, where a wide plain lies, the lake bottom might be expected to sink more slowly. Gurla is a splendid background to the holy lake—no artist in the world could conceive anything more magnificent and interesting.

Then we sounded 253, 243, 253, 223, 190, 177, and 82 feet, and perceived at length that the shore was near, for yaks and sheep were visible on the hills. The sea was now fairly high, and we had to bale the boat twice, and my fur coat on the bottom was wet. The two tired and sleepy men laboured painfully at the oars. We talked of how pleasant it would be to land, kindle a fire, and take our tea and food, but the shore still retired before us, and the hours of the afternoon slipped past. Gurla seemed to rise in the south directly from the water, its level skirts and low slopes being much foreshortened. The monks of the monastery here do not depend for water on the brooks, but drink the holy water of the lake, which has in reality the taste of the purest, most wholesome spring water. Its crystal purity and dark greenish-blue colour are as beautiful as the flavour, and to pilgrims from a distance the water of Manasarowar is preferable to sparkling champagne.

At last we were released from imprisonment in the boat. We saw the bottom through the clear water, and a few strokes of the oar brought the boat to a wall of clay and decaying

weeds, which the winter ice had pushed up on the bank. Inside the wall lies a longish lagoon, with mud in which one sinks to the knee. The time was half-past one, so we had been 16½ hours on the lake. But when we had reached the shore we found it impossible to get on land. After I had thought over the matter, while the men looked about them, we rowed northwards, and after an hour and a half discovered a place where the boat could be drawn ashore. Then we had been eighteen hours on the water.

A herdsman was seen, but he made off quickly. Fuel was collected and a fire lighted. Tea was infused and mutton fried, and when the three of us had eaten our dinner a temporary tent was constructed of the oars, mast, and sail, in which I lay down to sleep towards seven o'clock, wrapped in my fur, and with the life-buoys for a pillow. I had toiled for thirty-one hours continuously, so I went to sleep at once, and knew nothing of the storm which raged all night, or of the twenty-five pilgrims who passed by at dawn on their circuit of the holy lake.

CHAPTER XLV

MORE LAKE VOYAGES

I WAS awakened at six o'clock, having felt no cold in the night, for the minimum temperature was 40°. The morning was fine, only too warm; the pilgrims had gone away; we ate our breakfast, pushed the boat into the water, and rowed about 90 yards from the shore towards the north-north-east and north-north-west, describing a slight bend to camp No. 214. On our left hand was a row of pebble mounds, gradually rising to the top of the promontory which separates Manasarowar from Rakas-tal.

Soon the monastery Gossul-gompa was seen on its pebble terrace, nearly 130 feet high, like a swallow's nest hanging over the lake. A group of lamas stood silently watching the boat; they had never in their lives seen such a contrivance on the holy lake. When we drew near they vanished like rats into their holes, and only an old man remained sitting by a balustrade. I asked him the name of the monastery, and he said Gossul-gompa. The next point shut out the convent. The shore lagoons continue, though the margin below the hills is only 30 to 60 feet broad. The clay in which the lagoons are embedded is impermeable to water, but the lake has only to rise a couple of feet to find an outlet over the sandbank behind into the Rakas-tal, or Langak-tso, on the west. And when the channel at the north-west corner is silted up, as it is now, the Manasarowar has a subterranean outlet to the neighbouring lake, and its water consequently remains perfectly fresh.

I now intended to camp a little to the north at some suitable spot, and thence row the following day over the lake to our

headquarters near Serolung-gompa. We took bearings of a cinnabar-red hill lying on the north side of a slightly indented bay of the western shore. A fresh southerly breeze was blowing, we hoisted the sail, and flew whizzing over the lake. The pilgrims watched our voyage with the greatest astonishment, and the monks of Gossul cautiously followed us on the hills, no doubt wondering how such sacrilege would end. The wild-geese swam with their young ones out into the lake, while other swimming birds took themselves off some 100 yards inland, perhaps taking the boat for a curious water-bird of unusual size.

We went ashore at the red promontory, and while fuel was being collected and the camp arranged, I reconnoitred the neighbourhood from the heights above the landing-place. On the inner side of the shallow bay I found a hollow with its bottom lower than the surface of the lake, and filled with salt water, and on the west side of this swamp lies the lowest dip in the isthmus separating the twin lakes. Up there runs the pilgrim road, worn down by hundreds of thousands of weary feet. Three armed horsemen rode along the way. They came up without dismounting, and evidently did not know what to make of me. They could easily have taken me prisoner now that I was separated from my men, but they did not think of it, and rode on. A furious storm swept over the lake, its surface was wildly agitated, and covered with white horses. The farther, eastern part was of a deep green colour, while on our western shore it was lighter. The water of the shore lagoons was dark purple from the reflexion of the dense clouds. Towards four o'clock the air became oppressively still, then the wind sprang up, and an equally violent north-west storm came down raging and roaring. The wild south-easterly waves were suppressed by it, and the undulations remained uncertain till the new wave system was established. There was rain in many places round the lake, but we felt only a few drops. About six o'clock the sky looked threatening, with pitch-dark clouds all around, and not a trace could be seen of the eastern shore; we seemed to stand on the coast of the ocean. Soon after the wind veered round to the east-south-east, and then

the surf beat all the evening against our beach. How fortunate that the weather had not been like this the evening before!

We sat two hours by the fire and talked. Its flames flickered and darted in all directions, so that they singed Shukkur Ali's goat's beard. The weather was still so threatening that we made a shelter of the boat, in which I lay down early to sleep. Before dozing off I listened to the roar of the waves, and thought I heard all kinds of mysterious sounds in the night, but it was only the cry of water-birds and the howling of the wind among the hills.

The men had orders to call me before sunrise, for we must hasten if we wished to reach camp No. 212 before darkness set in. It was scarcely light when I came out of my shelter. The last provisions were consumed by the morning fire, and then we put off about half-past four in dull, disagreeable weather. The strong west wind carried us rapidly away from the shore—indeed, it was really too strong for our sail and mast, but it took us on and doubled our pace. We had been sheltered under the hills, but when we were a few minutes from the beach the lake became uncomfortably rough. But it was of little consequence, for we sailed with the waves and took in no water.

The men, too, were more alive than on the first nocturnal voyage. They had evidently made up their minds to reach their destination before night, and they rowed like galley-slaves with the whip hanging over them; they seemed to run a race with the west wind, and try to get away before the waves rose too madly. The water hissed and foamed round the boat, and bubbled in the wake as when butter is browned in a pan, and beneath us the lake boiled up. It was a fine voyage as we rocked, spinning rapidly over the holy waves.

Shukkur Ali's refrain to the strokes of the oars is now "Ya paté, parvardigar Rabel, alehmin" or "Illallah," while Rehim Ali responds to the cry of his comrade with "Haap"—the *p* jerked out quickly and loudly like an explosion—and with the refrain "Illallah," or "Svalallah." The Arabic words are, as usual in Ladak, much corrupted, but they lighten the work, and

after Shukkur Ali had yelled them out thirty-five times in a minute for nine hours as loudly as his vocal cords would let him, he was dreadfully hoarse in the evening.

Then the soundings were 131, 171, 171, 177, 177, 185, 187, and 177. Out beyond the abrasion terrace and its rather steep escarpment, the lake bottom is practically level. Hanging cloud fringes show that rain is pouring down in torrents on most sides, but we escape it. My excellent boatmen row twice as fast as on the first night, but it is impossible to induce them to row in time. If I loose the rudder a moment my boat falls off to the north or south instead of making east, where camp No. 212 lies. If it is dark before we reach the shore, our men are to light a pilè of wood to guide us.

The day draws to an end, the wind sweeps away the clouds, and they seem to gather round the mountains, which form a grand wreath around this pearl of lakes. The wind dies quite away, the sun scorches my weather-beaten face, and it is trying to the eyes when the sparkling gold of the sunbeams falls straight upon them. Their blinding light makes it difficult to distinguish our goal, but I hold the compass in my hand. The waves sink and become more languid, and the sea is again smooth as glass. Now we move more slowly, for the wind no longer pushes behind, but the men are unwearied; their boat-song dies away over the water, awaking no echo. The hills of the eastern shore show no perceptible difference in size between one sounding-point and the next. I sit dreaming, the rhythmical song and the splashing of the oars exercising a soporific effect. I seem to hear the tramp of a horse which bears a rider in silver harness over the granite mountains of the Trans-Himalaya through an unknown land, and in the dream I perceive that the features of the rider are my own. Then I am sad, for the dream is false. I have certainly crossed the Trans-Himalaya by three passes, but the most important part of the exploration has not been accomplished. That I have done my utmost in dealing both with the Tibetans and the Chinese to gain access to the country north of the Tsangpo is no consolation to me. If one can storm the

opposing bulwark of Nature, one should be able to overcome the obstinacy of man. Up yonder in the north, behind Kailas, the Trans-Himalaya extends its granite ramparts, and I must go there though it cost me my life. I must go there, if I clothe myself in the rags of a mendicant lama and beg my way from one black tent to another.

But we are still on the holy lake; it is a day of rest and a summer's day. I feel the skin of my face cracked by the burning of the sun. The hours crawl so slowly over the lake; patience, patience. The clouds display wonderful tone-effects; white and grey, sharply defined, they lie in different stages before the mountains, and behind them dark blue and purple curtains seem to hang down. We might be gliding over the bright floor of a temple hall, its walls richly decorated with flags and standards, which hang down from golden hooks on the ceiling of the sky, and touch the dust of earth with their fringes. The genii of Siva's paradise seem to hover round us. Now Shukkur Ali has taken to a new cry: "Ya aferin adétt," to which he adds "Ya, Allah," as he lifts his oar, and Rehim Ali chimes in with "Shupp." The depth still remains about 180 feet. To the south-east curious clouds are reflected in the lake, and a mist seems to be creeping over the water. All the tones are so light, airy, and grey that the landscape, which surrounds us like a ring where the water ends, seems hardly real. The twin summits of Pundi on the north-east are dark and solemn, and equally dark and solemn is the mirror of the lake. Silver beads drop from the oars and glitter like diamonds in the sun. I could live and die on this heavenly lake without ever growing weary of the wonderful spectacle always presenting fresh surprises.

Meanwhile a light south-easterly breeze disturbs again all the reflexions. The valleys Pachen and Pachung open their doors wider and wider, and allow us to see deeper into the recesses of the mountain. We recognize the hills above camp No. 212, but the tents are not visible. But we see a white spot on the northern shore which we take for a gompa. The depth is somewhat over 197 feet; "Ya bismillah hum!" is

Shukkur Ali's exclamation. At the sixteenth point the depth has again decreased, the south-easterly breeze has ceased, and the lake is again a sheet of glass. Now the tents can be seen as tiny specks, and we hope to complete this line also without a storm. A long, low, smooth swell of closely following waves, like the wake of a distant steamer, comes to meet us. How has it been produced, since the lake is quite peaceful? Perhaps by a slight convulsion of the earth's crust, which has disturbed the shore. The undulations on this round lake are very peculiar. At point No. 20 the depth is only 128 feet, and now we have not far to go.

Crack! Shukkur Ali's oar broke off in the middle with a bang, and the boat drew rapidly away from the blade end, which had to be picked up. The good man was so dumbfoundered and bewildered that he stammered, "That does not matter," and went on rowing with the shaft in the air. Now, when the tents were so near, he had developed too much strength. "It is well that the old man does not burst himself," I thought. We tied the parts together with a piece of string. There was a stir on the shore when we landed. The waiting men showed by word and gesture how glad they were to have us back again after giving way to all kinds of dismal forebodings about our sad fate. Just as they caught sight of the boat out on the lake, Robert was about to send out patrols up and down the shore. All was well in the camp, except that the Tibetans were troubled because their provisions were at an end. I gave them money to buy *tsamba* at the monastery. In the evening I discussed with Robert a plan of rowing southwards to investigate the lake bit by bit. We bought a plank and two staves in Serolung, and on the first leisure day Shukkur Ali cut out with an axe two excellent oars, after a pattern I had cut for him from the lid of a cigarette box.

On the next day, the anniversary of my arrival in Leh, a new month began. Every time I write in my diary "the first," I wonder what the new month holds in its lap—new discoveries or new disappointments? But I hope always, and believe that all will come right at last. Rabsang and Tundup,

Sonam rowed, and Robert steered along the three-feet line about 55 yards from the land, while I sat in the bow, compass in hand, and drew a map of the shore-line, the hills and valleys, and all the details that are characteristic of a lake. Charles A. Sherring states in his book on western Tibet that Mr. Drummond, Commissioner of Bareilly, sailed in 1855 in a boat on Manasarowar, but no result has come to my knowledge; on the contrary, I find that the very latest map of the lake needs a thorough correction. Soundings had never been taken before, and the object of my boating expeditions was to collect material for a detailed isobathic map. When we left behind us the basin of the Brahmaputra at the pass Tamlung, I had already suspected that Manasarowar was a member of the hydrographic system of the Sutlej, and I wished to try if I could not make a contribution towards the solution of this problem. I knew that my investigations could only be inadequate, but they yielded a number of facts hitherto unknown. Among these are the systematic sounding of the bed, by means of which conclusions may be drawn as to the origin and formation of the lake. I soon convinced myself that the lake depression had been excavated by old glaciers from the southern mountains, as I at first conjectured, and was not dammed up by moraine walls across the broad valley. But want of space forbids me to enter fully into a discussion of this interesting question.

We glide in a flat curve to the south-west, and have to increase our distance from the shore that we may not run aground on the sandy bottom. The water at this season of the year has a fairly constant temperature of about 50°. Then we approach the mouth of the Tage-tsangpo. For about two-thirds of a mile the river flows parallel to the shore of the lake, being separated from it by an embankment 13 feet high, which has been cast up by the waves and the pressure of the ice. Here we encamped among drift-sand and bushes, and measured the Tage-tsangpo. Its breadth was 56.8 feet, its maximum depth 3.4 feet, and its discharge 397.6 cubic feet a second, or 106 cubic feet more than where we last gauged

it above the Na-marden affluent. I have already related how we first came in contact with this river at the pass Tam-lung-la; its source stream, the Gang-lung-chu or "water of the ice valley," comes from the Gang-lung mountain in the south, and so there is a glacier or "ice valley" in this mountain which is the origin of the Tage-tsangpo. It is seen from the Tam-lung-la, and is the glacier which I venture to call the Sutlej's genetic source or the real original source. We shall return to this attractive problem.

From every camp on the lake Robert rowed out with two men at right angles to the beach, sounding the depth every five minutes. By means of these radiating lines we discovered the saucer-shaped form of the lake, for, as I have already remarked, the lake bottom is on the whole very even. Now, from camp No. 215, Robert rowed out to a depth of 121 feet.

On August 2 we continued our boating excursion, while the caravan marched along the shore. All went excellently well, we heard not a word of any officials in pursuit of us, and the Tibetans placed yaks and mules at our disposal with the greatest willingness. A couple of showers fell, loud thunder rolled in Gurla Mandatta, and a violent south-westerly breeze forced us to come to a halt and wait at a place on the shore where the brook from the Nima-pendi valley debouches, forming a delta within a broken mole. Fish are plentiful in the brook, but here also the Tibetans asked us not to catch them, and we respected their wishes—only stupid and uncouth men wound the religious feelings of others. By this brook the lake receives a tribute of 49.4 cubic feet per second, while the Richung-chu entering farther to the west-south-west contributes 63.6 cubic feet.

We passed Yanggo-gompa under sail at a rather short distance, and steered straight for Tugu-gompa, picturesquely situated on a strand terrace. Here begin the long lagoons and mud embankment we had seen from the western beach, and we were carried comfortably ashore and greeted politely by a band of Hindus consisting of pilgrims and traders. A number of Tibetan shepherds from the north were staying

here, where a not unimportant wool market is held every summer. A group of monks stood on the roof. Our camp was pitched close to the foot of the monastery, on the shore road, and had a fine view over the lake and Kailas behind it. At the southern wall of the convent is a yard enclosed by a stone wall, where 500 sheep were packed like herrings in a barrel, to be shorn in turn by Hindus and Botias who come from Almora and the border country in the south. The nomads receive eight annas (8d.) for every sheep, good interest on their live capital. The wool from 500 sheep is said to amount to 16 yak-loads.

We paid at once a visit to the monastery, where the thirteen monks and their abbot, Tabga Rinchen, received us with the greatest kindness and politeness, showed us everything, and explained to us the various temple halls. They had heard of my voyages on the lake, and had now seen with their own eyes my boat sailing before a favourable wind, and they expressed their sincere conviction that I must possess occult powers to defy with impunity the god of the holy lake. But they understood that this was owing to my friendship with the Tashi Lama, who had given me his holy blessing. The monastery Tugu-gompa is a dependency of Shibeling-gompa in Purang, and most of the monks come from there to spend three years on the lake. They own herds in Chang-tang, trade, and seem to be in good circumstances; at any rate, they help the poor pilgrims who have nothing to eat on their wanderings round Tso-mavang. They receive gifts from well-to-do pilgrims. The temple halls are picturesque, handsome and in very good order. You enter from an upper balcony into an outer hall with wall paintings, among which is a picture of Tso-mavang with the fish-god, Madö Gemo, rising from the waves. He has seven water-snakes in his hair, and the lower part of his body is like a green dolphin. The lake is as deep as it is broad, and concentric rings encircle the rising god. The abbot said that the fish-god comes up to greet the god of Tso-mavang, Hlabsen Dorche Barva, who gallops in a cloud of grey fiery tongues and

smoke on a pink horse, and is armed with spear, bow and quiver. In the background stands Kang-rinpoche, the holy mountain. The whole picture is wanting in perspective and proportion, but it is curious and interesting, and the Lamaist artist has done his best to idealize the holy lake by his drawing and colouring. I made a copy of this work of art, which has some relationship with our old country paintings.

From the entrance hall a small door gives access to the holiest shrine in all Tugu-gompa, namely, the hall of the lake god. He is represented only as a mask, surrounded by *kadakhs*, and seems to peep out from between curtains. A couple of flames burn before him and the usual bowls are placed on a stool table. No man but the monks themselves may enter this little alcove, but I obtained permission to sit on the threshold and draw a sketch of it. I regarded this unknown Hlabsen Dorche Barva almost with reverence, for he ruled over my beloved lake and had been so gracious to me.

But the finest sight of all was the view from the monastery roof. The highest parts of Gurla Mandatta, here called Mama-nani or Mamo-nani, were concealed by the lower flanks, for we were too near to it, but the surface of the lake stretched out northwards to an immense distance. A lama, who had served at several different times in the convent, asserted that the lake rose 24 to 28 inches in rainy summers, and declared that eighteen years before the water had reached to the foot of the red façade of the monastery. This seemed improbable, for the distance between the lake and the monastery was 323 feet, and the foot of the convent façade (the right corner looking from the strand) lay 20.67 feet above the level of the lake. I quote these figures to enable a future explorer to determine whether the lake has risen or fallen since August 2, 1907.

I passed the next days in the monastery, sketched the lamas at their various temple services, and fell in love with this pleasant, handsome Tugu-gompa. Punso Lama, a young monk, was my particular friend, and showed me everything with the inexhaustible knowledge of a trained museum attendant.

Three officials of the Devashung had established themselves in the entrance hall in the company of the four ghostly kings, and mattresses, bundles, tables, swords and guns lay or stood in profane disorder at the entrance to the dwelling of the high gods.

Meanwhile Robert rowed out from the southern shore, and sounded the depths down to the contour of 207 feet. On August 5, we paid a visit to Yanggo-gompa, which contains ten monks and a nun. They told me that they came from the Hor country in the north of central Tibet, and therefore call themselves Horpa, but also Dokpa; the Changpa are the nomads of Chang-tang. The abbot is from Sekiya-gompa. In the monastery's *gunkang*, a dark subterranean crypt, hang masks, *kadakhs*, drums, spears and guns. I asked for what purpose the monks wanted the firearms, as one of their fundamental dogmas forbids them to extinguish the light of life, and they answered that with these guns many wild yaks had been killed, whose flesh had been used for human food, and that therefore the guns had been installed in a place of honour in the monastery. Yamba Tsering, a monk twenty-two years old, sat with his head against a wooden pillar, and gazed in silence at the dim light which fell into the crypt through an impluvium; he looked like a dreamer, a searcher after hidden truth. Beside him sat the wrinkled nun. Both found their way into my sketch-book. The foot of the monastery façade lies exactly '14¾ feet above the level of the lake, and the river Richen-chu, entering the lake behind the convent, discharges 62.15 cubic feet of water.

Yanggo-gompa was the third of the eight monasteries of the holy lake which I had visited, and I wished to see them all without exception. And I also wished to gauge all the streams falling into the lake. It fluctuates from day to day, according as there is rain or sunshine, but only by exact measurements could I arrive at the volume which is poured into the clear basin of Tso-mavang during a day of summer.

CHAPTER XLVI

A STORMY VOYAGE OVER THE HOLY LAKE

On August 6 we stayed at Tugu-gompa, one of the most interesting monasteries I have seen in Tibet. I was engaged all day long, with Robert and Rabsang to assist me, in measuring with a tape the dimensions of the three storeys, and drawing plans of them. The third, however, is little more than a roof balcony. I have no space to give the results here. As we were on the roof, eight monks were sitting in the inner court counting their receipts, which were duly entered in a cash-book. Their rupees and *tengas* lay in heaps on a short-legged table. I gave a handful of rupees, throwing them among the piles and disturbing the calculations of the monks. However, they were very thankful for this unexpected contribution, which seemed to fall from heaven.

About thirty Hindu pilgrims set up their shabby tents near us. In the evening they lighted a fire on a flat metal dish, which was pushed out on to the water, and shone like a beacon fire by the bank. This floating pyre was meant as a homage to the lake.

On August 7 I was awakened early when the sun was pouring fresh gold over the blue lake, and a lama on the convent roof was blowing long-drawn heavy notes from his shell horn over the surface. I hastened to the shore where the boat lay ready with its usual equipment. Shukkur Ali and Tundup Sonam put the sounding-line in order and stowed our baggage. The Hindus lined the bank like the wild-geese, left their clothing on land, and waded, with only a cloth round

their loins, to bathe in the holy beatifying water of the lake. It must be very refreshing to people from the close jungles of India to wash in such a cool morning in water at only a few degrees above freezing point. Most of them, however, go in no farther than up to their knees. There they squat down, or scoop up the water in their joined hands, and throw it over them. They make symbolical signs, fill their mouths with water and send it out in a stream, hold their hands flat against their faces and look at the rising sun, and perform all kinds of absurd, complicated manipulations, which I remember seeing at the ghâts of Benares. They are sunburnt, thin and miserable, and they are too thinly clad—I did not see a single sheepskin—and they complain of the severity of the climate, catch chills, and come to my tent for medicine. Some stood about an hour in the water before they returned to the beach to put on their clothing, and then they sat in groups talking. But they return to the valleys of India convinced that they have performed an action well-pleasing to the gods, and they take with them small metal bottles filled with holy water from Manasarowar to give to their relations. They believe that one of the ways of salvation runs past Manasarowar. They are always hopeful, and that is a fine thing for poor pilgrims on the face of the earth.

They stared with astonishment at our boat, which was driven out from the shore by powerful strokes, perhaps with envious eyes, for many asked me afterwards to let them go with me, that they might for the rest of their lives look back to the time when they floated on the sacred waves. The lake lay smooth and still, but at the first sounding-station (115 feet), the lake god shook himself, a north-westerly breeze sprang up, and the waves splashed and danced briskly against our bow, for our third line of soundings was carried north, 27° W., towards camp No. 214. We sounded 174, 207, 226, 236, 236, 246, and 253 feet, while the waves increased, and the boat rode well but with diminished speed. Gurla Mandatta was almost clear, but Kailas was buried in clouds. The wind fell and the sun glowed, and everything foretold a fine day. At

the ninth point the depth was less, 246 feet; we had passed the line of soundings made in the night and its great depths. Afterwards the depths were 223, 197, 187, 194, and 200 feet.

The north-westerly breeze began to blow again, and at mid-day clouds gathered in the north. A heavy bluish-grey layer of clouds sank down slowly on the mountain flanks, and from its under side rain fringes hung down, greyish-purple on a compact dark background. All the mountains and the whole strand disappeared, and the masses of cloud seemed as though they would fall on the lake. We passed the fifteenth station, which showed a depth of 200 feet, and kept a steady course towards the red promontory. The rowers put forth all their strength when I had pointed out to them that we were drawing near to the shelter of the bank, and that the waves were becoming smaller the farther we advanced. We had left Gossul-gompa a good distance to the left; I could not see the monastery myself, but the men saw it as a small white speck in the distance.

Just before one o'clock yellow swirls of dust and sand appeared near the landspit which we were making for. They became denser and larger, and looked yellow and dismal on the dark purple background of gathering clouds. It was not the first time I had seen such storm warnings.

"We are in for a storm," I said quietly.

"God is with us," replied Shukkur Ali quite as calmly.

"Row on and we shall get in before the waves are high."

"If we turn straight to the shore, it will be nearer," suggested Shukkur Ali.

"No, we will not alter the course, we will make straight for our goal, and we shall soon be in the shelter of the hills on the shore; there are only three soundings to be taken, and they can be left for another time."

The wind fell again, and it began to rain in a few large drops, which on reaching the surface of the water remained an instant as separate round beads, as though they were covered with a film of oil. Then followed an extremely heavy shower of hail which lashed the water as it streamed down, enveloped

us in semi-darkness, caused the lake to leap up in millions of tiny fountains, and in two minutes made the inside of the boat white. Nothing was visible but ourselves and the boat, only water and hail, which scourged the lake like rods and produced a hissing gurgle. Now and then the clouds were lighted up by quivering lightning, and the thunder growled heavily and threateningly in the north. Then the men turned round, but could see nothing in the mist; they were uneasy and we all felt that there was danger ahead.

The hail was followed by pelting rain, a downpour of such furious impetuosity that I could not imagine any more tremendous. It fell in such quantities and with such force that we were bowed down by it. I had on three shirts and a leather vest, but after a short time I felt that the water was streaming down my bare skin, which had this advantage that all the future douches that awaited us could make no further impression. I had my fur coat on my knees with the skin side up, and in all its hollows the water collected in small pools. A quantity of water fell into the boat and washed about with the stroke of the oars. The shore was not visible, and I steered by the compass.

"Row on, we have not much farther to go."

At length the rain became finer, but at four minutes after one o'clock, we heard a deafening roar in the north-east, a sound such as only a storm of the greatest violence can produce. Hail and rain were nothing to it; now that the heavy sheets of water were withdrawn the storm had a free course and swept suddenly and furiously over the lake. Why had we not started an hour earlier, instead of watching the religious ablutions of the Hindus? No, the god of Tso-mavang was angry and would teach us once for all not to treat so lightly the lake which splashes his dolphin's tail with its green water. How we envied the monks in Gossul-gompa, and our men down in the south under the peaceful walls of the Tugu monastery! What would they say, what would they do, if we were drowned like cats in this raging lake?

For a minute we struggled frantically to keep our course in

spite of the waves which swept upon us from the right. They swelled up with astonishing rapidity, and every wave which dashed against the taut canvas of the boat and dissolved into spray, made a cracking sound as though the little vessel were about to burst. The next was still larger; I warded it off with my Indian helmet, and Tundup Sonam received a cold buffet which disconcerted him for a moment. After the third, which threw its foaming crest over the gunwale, the water stood 4 inches deep in the boat, the little nutshell with the weight of three men lay far too deep in the water, and the water we had shipped gurgled, lapped, and splashed hither and thither with the roll of the boat.

Now I perceived that the attempt to hold our course was hopeless. We must fall off with the wind and waves. We had Gossul-gompa to the south, 50° W., and the storm was from the north-east; we could find refuge in the monastery, if we could get so far. The difficulty was to turn at right angles without capsizing. Twice I failed, and we shipped more water, but the third time I succeeded, and now, if we had any care for our lives we must prevent the boat from veering up into the wind; the storm came a little from the right. Tundup Sonam, who rowed the starboard oar in the bow, had all the work, while Shukkur Ali had only to dip in his oar occasionally at my command, but though outwardly calm he was too excited and eager, and when my voice could not be heard amid the howling of the storm, I put my hand on his knuckles to make him leave the oar alone.

Now began a voyage such as I had never experienced in all my journeys in Tibet. The storm increased to a hurricane, and under its pressure the waves became as high as the billows of the Baltic in stormy weather; a steamer would have rolled in such a sea, and we in the little canvas boat had to negotiate the unexpected cross rolls following one another. Lashed, hunted, and persecuted by the raging force of the wind, we swept over the lake. Every new wave that lifted us up seemed bigger than the last. Some had sharp smooth crests, as though moulded out of mountain crystal, and

reflected the dark clouds in the north. It seemed as though a bottomless, watery grave yawned in front of us which might at any moment swallow up our boat. Others came rolling up foam-capped, hissing and thundering behind us, and we shuddered at the thought that they might fill the boat in an instant and send it to the bottom, but it rose bravely over the crests. The view was open on all sides, the sun was visible in the south, Gurla Mandatta was clear and sharp, to the south, 50° W., even the terrace on which Gossul-gompa stands could be seen, and it was black and threatening only in the north. During the second when the boat was balanced quivering on the crest of the wave, we might fancy ourselves transplanted to a lofty pass in Chang-tang with a world of mountain ranges all round us, while the foam of the waves had an illusive resemblance to the fields of eternal snow.

But this wave also passes on and the boat sinks into a hollow, we fall into a water grotto, the nearest waves conceal the view, the walls of the grotto are of the purest malachite behind us and like emerald in front. Now we are lifted up again—"At it, Tundup Sonam, or the huge foaming crest will thrust us down!"—he puts forth all his strength and the wave passes us. It is irregular and reminds us of the pyramidal summit of Kubi-gangri; two such crests tower up in front of us, and their edges are shattered into spray by the wind. They are as transparent as glass, and through one of them the image of Gurla Mandatta's bright white snowfields is refracted as in a magnifying glass. We have a watery portal in front of us and the tips of the waves are gilded with the faint reflexion of the sun in the south.

We struggle bravely and I sit on the bottom of the boat pushing the rudder with all my strength to keep the boat in the right direction, while the spray, lashed by the wind, spurts over us as from a fire-hose. Frequently a broken crest slips over the gunwale, but we have not a hand free to bale out the water. We see the boat filling slowly—shall we reach the bank before it sinks? The mast and sail lie with two reserve oars tied fast across the middle of the boat. If we could set a

sail the boat would be easier to handle, but it is not to be thought of now, when we can hardly keep our balance sitting down and stiffening ourselves with our feet, with the heavy blows and the unexpected positions the boat assumes according to the form of the waves, their slopes, curves and curls. And, besides, in such a storm the mast would break like glass.

We had turned at right angles to our line of soundings for now we thought only of saving our lives, if that were possible—to reach the land before the boat sank. Then, in the most critical moment, when an irregular wave threatened the boat, I called on Tundup Sonam to put forth all his strength, and he did it too well, so that the oar broke with a crack. Now all hung by a hair, we could not manage the boat and it must inevitably capsize and be swamped under this foaming crest. But Tundup Sonam realized the danger, and with a quick grasp tore loose a reserve oar, while Shukkur Ali backed with the leeward oar; after another douche we trimmed the boat again.

The longer the storm lasts and the larger the expanse of lake left behind us in the north-east, the higher rise the waves; we are swept forwards, we rock up and down on the lumpy lake, and fresh cold douches are constantly poured over us from the crests as they split into spray like plumes of feathers. How small and helpless we feel in the presence of these roused infuriated forces of Nature, how imposing and awful, and yet how grand and splendid is this spectacle! The two men had never in their lives seen anything to equal it. I sit with my back to the pursuing billows, but the men have them before their faces, and I know when large waves are approaching by their muttered "Ya Allah!" Tundup is as pale as he can be with a sun-tanned skin; Shukkur Ali seems composed, but he does not sing to-day as he dips in his oar. Tundup afterwards confided to me that he was quite convinced that we should perish.

It is impossible to keep my eyeglasses dry and clear, and I have not for a long time had a dry thread on me. Shukkur

Ali turns round and says that the monastery is in sight, but it is too far for my eyes. "Look at the wave yonder," I call out. "Is it not beautiful?" He smiles and murmurs his "Ya Allah." Its crest breaks close to us like a waterfall, and, air being forced into the water, it rises again in bubbling foam and the lake seems to boil and seethe. Hitherto there has been drizzling rain, but now the air is clear. The lake assumes a different hue, the waves are dark and bright, close to us black as ink, but lighter towards their tips, and the horizon of the lake is often seen through the next wave as through a sheet of ice.

Thus we are driven on, and the time seems endless. For five quarters of an hour we have striven with the freaks of the lake god, and every minute has seemed to us an hour. At last the monastery Gossul appears and grows larger, the details becoming distinguishable, and I see the white façade with its upper border of red, its windows and roof streamers, and some monks behind a balustrade with their eyes fixed on the boat. And below the cloister terrace there is wild foaming surf. How we are to land I cannot imagine; I have experienced such adventures before, but never anything as furious as to-day. We envy the monks up above with firm ground under their feet, and should like to be beside them. The log has been out all the time, and now I draw it in with a quick pull and call out to the men to be ready to jump overboard when I give the sign. I place the note-book and the map I have sketched to-day, all dripping with water, into the front of my leather vest, that at any rate I may not lose the figures I have obtained.

We have only a few minutes more. With the help of Shukkur Ali I manage to get out of my heavy soaked boots, and have scarcely done so when the boat is pitched violently into the breakers on the shore. Here the water is as brown as oatmeal, and the undertow sucks out the boat again. Now Tundup Sonam wishes to jump out of the boat but I advise him to try first with the oar if he can reach the bottom; he feels no ground and has to wait patiently. The boat receives

a blow from behind and threatens to capsize; the oarsmen work as if they were possessed to fight against the undertow, and before I am aware Tundup has jumped out, and, up to his breast in water, draws the boat shorewards with all his might. Now we two follow his example, and with our united strength succeed at last in drawing the boat up the beach before the raging surf can dash it to pieces. One more hard pull and we have drawn it up over the mud embankment into the lagoon, which the waves cannot reach.

Now we had had enough, and we threw ourselves down on the sand, quite tired out. The fearful excitement and tension of body and mind during an hour and a half was followed by stupor and weariness; we had nothing to say to one another, and I gave no orders for the night. We were shipwrecked men, and had every reason to be pleased and thankful that we had firm ground under our feet again, and had escaped safely from the green graves which had yawned below us, threatening to engulf us if we had not been on the alert in critical moments.

We had only dozed a few minutes when two monks and three young novices came gently over the sand and approached us cautiously, as if they were not quite certain whether we were alive or dead. When we got up they greeted us kindly, and inquired how we were and whether we needed help. They were deeply interested, and told us how they had seen from their balcony the boat tossing on the waves, and had been convinced that it must founder in the unusually violent storm that had swept over the lake. They had been frightened to death, and said that it was fearful to see the boat sink in the trough of the waves, and every moment they expected that it would not appear again. On landing we were immediately below them, and the sight was too terrible. Were we hurt at all, and would we come up into the monastery and spend the night in their warm rooms? But I thanked them for their kind offers and preferred to sleep as usual in the open air. If they could get us fuel and food we should be much obliged.

They bowed and disappeared in their maze of staircases,

and presently came back with sacks full of dung, brushwood, and billets, and soon a grand fire was burning on the terrace. They kindled it themselves, for our matches and tinder were quite useless. Then they went off to fetch some eatables, for the contents of our packet of provisions were turned into paste by the water.

Meanwhile we made ourselves comfortable on the narrow strip of ground below the monastery. Two large caves opened into the terrace, their vaults black with smoke, for pilgrims and herdsmen spend the night in them. They would have sheltered us from the wind, but they were so dirty that we preferred to pitch our camp at the edge of the bank. It was wet with rain, but we scraped out dry sand with our hands. The boat was taken to pieces and emptied—it was half full of water—and then it was set up by the fire as a screen.

When the fire had burned up and was glowing hot, we stripped ourselves stark naked, wrung out one garment after another, and crouched by the fire to dry our underclothing and ourselves. Each had to look after himself, for we were all in the same plight. I spread out my things as near as possible to the fire and hung them over the oars and life-buoys to expose them to the wind and heat. Meanwhile I dried my woollen vest bit by bit, turned it inside out, held it to the fire on this side and that, out and inside, and when it was quite dry put it on again. Then came the turn of my unmentionables, then of my stockings, and so on. Nothing could be done with the leather waistcoat and the fur coat; they would not be dry by night, but what did it matter? It was at any rate better here than in the crystal halls of the lake king.

It is still broad daylight, but the storm rages, Gurla Mandatta and all the country to the south has disappeared, for the gale is passing off in that direction. There is fine close rain again. Falcons scream in the holes of the pebbly slopes—dangerous neighbours for the bluish-grey pigeons cooing on the rocks.

The monks came down again with sweet and sour milk and *tsamba*, tea we had ourselves, and the simple dinner tasted

delicious. Then we sat a couple of hours by the fire while the storm continued. I dried my diary and entered the notes which form the contents of this chapter. Between whiles Shukkur Ali entertained me with stories of his adventures during his travels in the service of Younghusband and Wellby. Now that he had escaped death by the skin of his teeth, the past returned more vividly to his memory, and when once he was started on his reminiscences he could not be stopped, good old Shukkur Ali. I listened with one ear and wrote with the other—I had almost said—not to appear uninterested; and, after all, the chief thing to Shukkur Ali was that he could prattle.

At last the northern sky becomes clear, and all the mountains are white with snow; before only Kailas and its next neighbours were distinguished by white caps, but now all is white. We are certainly past the early days of August, but is it possible that autumn is already beginning? The summer has been so short that we have hardly had time to get accustomed to it.

Another night falls on the earth. Impenetrable darkness surrounds us, and only in the zenith a few stars sparkle. The swell still roars against the strand, but Tso-mavang is gently falling asleep. Above us towers the monastery on its steep wall like a fortress, and the monks have retired to rest. The falcons are heard no more, and the pigeons have sought their nests.

CHAPTER XLVII

ON THE ROOF OF THE GOSSUL MONASTERY

In the middle of the night I was awaked by a terrible row; a dog from the monastery had crept under my men's half of the boat to see what it could find, but chanced to fall into the hands of Shukkur Ali, and got a good thrashing. The temperature fell to 37.4°. Rabsang came riding up at sunrise. The men had feared that we must have perished in the waves. He brought provisions and a packet of letters from Thakur Jai Chand, the British commercial agent in Gartok, who was at the time in Gyanima, where the fair was being held. He wrote that Colonel Dunlop Smith had directed him on June 27 to try to obtain news of me. Guffaru had performed his task satisfactorily, and all my baggage was safely deposited in Gartok, and my voluminous correspondence had been forwarded to Simla. From Mr. Sherring, who had made a journey to Manasarowar some years previously, I received a very kind letter; he had also had the kindness to send me his interesting book on western Tibet, while his wife had added a whole packet of English and French newspapers, literature the more acceptable that the extensive library presented to me by O'Connor had long been read through and dispersed to the four winds of heaven. It was a singular coincidence that where I had suffered shipwreck I was so unexpectedly brought again into contact with the outer world.

I was deeply moved by Rabsang's information that the monks in Tugu-gompa, when they saw the storm burst over our frail boat, had burnt incense before the images of the

lake-god and implored him to deliver us from the waves. They had done it of their own accord, and not at the request of any one. They said it would be deplorable if we were lost; they had a heart, and were not so unfeeling as might be supposed. Few proofs of sympathy have touched me like this.

Accompanied by Rabsang, I ascended in the early morning the winding path up to the monastery. At the turns and projections stand cubical *chhortens* and votive cairns, and here and there a streamer flutters on a mast. A *samkang*, a hermit's dwelling, hangs over a cavern produced by the fall of a huge mass from the slope of the pebble terrace eleven years ago. I told the monks that they should not put too much confidence in the ground on which their monastery stands. They reckon millions of years for the soul's wanderings, but their earthly dwellings are not built for eternity. They answered calmly that the monastery had already stood for one hundred years, and that it would certainly stand as long as they were living there; for in general the monks are changed every three years, and they come here from the monastery Shibeling in Purang, by which they are maintained. There are only three of them, but I saw also four novices, seven, nine, ten, and eleven years old respectively, running about as actively as mice, and waiting on the monks. Their mother, a nun from Purang, also lives in the monastery. She had been married before she "took the veil," and when her husband died she dedicated herself and all her children to the Church. I afterwards learned that one of the "boys" was a girl; they were so like one another that I could not distinguish between them. At first they were shy and timid, but after I had given them a few silver coins they were soon at ease with me. They appeared small and stunted for their age, but the abbot told me that they had mourned so much at the death of their father that their growth was checked. Almost all the day they were bringing water from the lake in clay jugs, which they carried in a basket suspended by a strap round their forehead; they carry therefore with the muscles of the head

and neck, which are consequently so much developed that they seem too large for the body. But they also receive instruction and take their first uncertain steps in the domain of wisdom; the eldest is said to have already acquired considerable knowledge.

I went into the temple and studied it thoroughly. I remained there twelve hours, drew, took measurements, made all kinds of inquiries, and took notes. Every part is handsome, interesting, and well kept. The *lhakang* is like an old armoury, a museum of fine, rare articles, which show great artistic skill, and have been designed, carved, modelled, and painted with unwearied patience and real taste. The hall, supported by eight pillars, has two red divans; a statue of Buddha in gilded bronze, and a number of other idols; drums hanging in stands, lacquered tables with the usual religious objects, and a large quantity of votive bowls in the brightest brass and of uncommon, tasteful forms. On both sides of the pillars hang *tankas* in four rows, which are as long as standards and triumphal banners, and are so arranged that they do not prevent the light from playing on the faces of the gods. In a corner surely waves a Swedish flag? Ah, it is only a blue and yellow *tanka*, but it reminds me of the golden period of our fame and victories.

The *lhakang* of Gossul is not built on the usual plan; the skylight is wanting, and instead there are three windows in the façade facing the lake. But the gods do not see the lake, for the windows are pasted over with paper on a trellis-work of laths. Why is the beautiful view concealed and the daylight excluded? To enhance the mystical gloom within and excite the greater wonder and reverence in the minds of the pilgrims who come in half-blinded from the daylight, and that they may not see that the gold is only gilded brass, and that the marks of the brush and the chisel may not be too profanely evident. The poorer a monastery, the darker are its temple halls; the darkness hides their poverty and helps the monks to impose on the faithful.

Somchung is the name of a small compartment no larger

than a cabin. On its divan are cushions and pieces of cloth arranged in circles to form two nests, in which two monks sit during the night service. On the altar table before Sakya-muni's image stand forty bowls filled with water, and on another table some peacock's feathers in a silver vase, with which the gods are sprinkled with holy water to the cry "Om a hum."

In former times robbers and footpads harboured here, and had their hiding-places in the caves below the monastery. From these they fell upon the pilgrims and killed many of them. Then the god of Tso-mavang appeared to Jimpa Ngurbu, a noble lama, and ordered him to build the monastery, that it might be a sure stronghold for the protection of pilgrims, and for the honour of the gods. Even now the country is not safe. Last year two scoundrels, who had plundered the nomads, were taken and executed; and we ourselves saw ten Gurkhas, armed with guns, who rode past us in search of a robber band which had stolen their horses and sheep.

The monks said that the lake usually freezes in January; in stormy weather the ice breaks up, but when the weather is calm and the frost is sharp, the whole lake freezes over in a single day, and breaks up again in a single day when it is stormy. Unfortunately the statements made about the level of the water and the discharge are contradictory and untrustworthy. A lama, thirty-five years of age, now staying here, had lived on Tso-mavang as a child. He said that he well remembered the time when the water flowed out of the lake to Rakas-tal in such quantities that a horseman could not cross the channel, which is called Ganga, without danger. But now this channel had ceased to carry water for nine years. I was shown where the shore line ran last autumn, five fathoms farther inland, so that the lake must then have been 22½ inches higher. I was also shown a yellow block of stone, to which the water was said to have reached twelve years ago, and this point lay 10⅓ feet above the present level of the lake. Such a rate of fall is improbable, though this statement accorded fairly

well with the information I had received at Tugu-gompa. The threshold of the one cave lay now 22.57 feet, and that of the other 120.4 feet from the shore, 18.86 feet above the water. I was told that when the monastery was built, one hundred years ago, the lake had reached both these caves, and that only a small path was left along the strand by which the caves could be approached. However, the dates of the Tibetans are exceedingly uncertain, and to arrive at safe conclusions we must resort to the statements of European travellers. I will make a few remarks on them later. When I asked one of the monks what became of all the water poured into Tso-mavang by all the rivers and brooks, he replied:

"However much it rains, and though all the tributaries are full to overflowing, no change is noticeable in the lake, for as much water is evaporated as flows in. In our holy books it is written that if all the tributaries failed, the lake would not sink and disappear, for it is eternal and is the abode of high gods. But now we see with our own eyes that it is always falling, and we do not know what this means."

The following records may be useful to future explorers: the lower edge of the massive threshold of the main gateway in the façade of Gossul-gompa lay on August 8, 1907, exactly 122.7 feet above the surface of the lake, as I ascertained by the help of a reflecting level.

We ascended to the roof of Gossul-gompa. It is flat, as usual, with a chimney, parapet, and streamers. No language on earth contains words forcible enough to describe the view from it over the lake. It was, indeed, much the same as we had seen from various points on the shore, but the light and shade was so enchanting and the colouring so wonderful that I was amazed, and felt my heart beat more strongly than usual as I stepped out of the dark temple halls on to the open platform. Tundup Sonam said in his simple way that the lake with its encircling mountains seemed like the sky with its light clouds. I, too, was the victim of an illusion which almost made me catch at the parapet for support. I wondered whether it was a fit of giddiness. I took, to wit, the border of

mountains on the eastern shore for a belt of light clouds, and the surface of the sea for part of the sky. The day was perfectly calm and the lake like a mirror, in which the sky was reflected; both looked exactly the same, and were of the same colour, and the mountains, which in consequence of the distance were all blended into a dark shadow, were like a girdle of clouds. The air was not clear, everything was of a dull subdued tone, there was no colour to speak of, but all was grey—sky, land, and water, with a tinge of blue, a fairy scene of glass, with decorations of white gauze seen through a thin blue veil of incense rising from the altar of the mighty god of the lake.

What has become of the earth, if all is sky and clouds? We are not totally bewitched, for we are standing on the roof of the monastery leaning against the parapet. A dream-picture in the most ethereal transitory tones floats before us. We seem to stand on a promontory jutting out into endless space, which yawns around us and in front. And where is now the holy lake, which yesterday nearly robbed us of life, and on which the storm was so furious that I still seem to feel the ground quaking under my feet? Has the Gossul monastery been changed by some whim of the gods into an air-ship which is bearing us away to another planet? Its streamers hang motionless on their poles, and nothing can be seen of the mountains, country, and ground.

"Oh yes, if you lean a little over the parapet," says a monk, smiling. True! Then the illusion vanishes, to my great chagrin. I should have liked to remain a while under its enchantment. Just below us runs the narrow margin on the bank, with its black dam of clay and water-weeds, and its elongated lagoons. Through the crystal-clear water we see the yellowish-grey mud on the lake bottom, the dark fringe of weeds, and the dark depths beyond. It is like a huge aquarium covered with plate-glass. Two flocks of geese are swimming on the water, producing diverging ripples. All is so indescribably quiet; so ethereal, transparent, and transitory, so subtile and sensitive, that I scarcely dare breathe. Never has

a church service, a wedding march, a hymn of victory, or a funeral made a more powerful impression on me.

Did fate compel me to pass my life in a monastery in Tibet, I would without hesitation choose Gossul-gompa. There I would observe the fluctuations of the lake and the annual curves of the temperature. I would sit up there like a watchman, gaze over the lake, and watch how its aspect changed every hour during the twelve months of the year. I would listen to the howling of the autumn storms, and would notice on calm November days how the belt of ice along the shore broadened from day to day, if only to melt again in the course of a day. The ring of ice would creep on ever nearer to the middle of the lake, be destroyed again and again by new gales, and then begin again to enchain the waters. And at length, on a day in January, when the layers of water were cooled through and through and no wind disturbed the air, I should see the god of Tso-mavang stretch a ringing roof of glass over his green palace, and the winter storms bestrew it with white powder and drive the whirling snow in dense clouds over the ice, with its smooth, dark-green surface peeping out here and there. And on calm days the lake would lie a white plain, lifeless and lonely under its white shroud, and I should sit by the bier of my friend longing for the spring. In vain would the first storms of spring contend with the solidity of the ice and its brave resistance, but at last the sun would come to help the wind, and would make the ice brittle and rotten. Leads and fissures would start up in all directions, and the next storm that swept over the ice would overcome all resistance, flinging about the ice blocks and piling them up one on another, driving them to the shore, and sweeping breakers over them so that they would be crushed, splintered, pulverized, and melted in the rolling surf. Then I should rejoice at the victory of the storm, the release of Tso-mavang and its restoration to life, and would listen to the song of the waves and the screaming of the wild geese.

Perhaps an hour such as I spent at the parapet of Gossul comes only once a year. The effect is the result of a certain

temperature, a certain percentage of humidity, calm air, preceded by rain and a north-easterly storm. How seldom are all these conditions fulfilled? At most once a year, and just at this hour, this hour of all hours, I stood on the roof and saw the blue lake at rest after its play.

Wonderful, attractive, enchanting lake! Theme of story and legend, playground of storms and changes of colour, apple of the eye of gods and men, goal of weary, yearning pilgrims, holiest of the holiest of all the lakes of the world, art thou, Tso-mavang, lake of all lakes. Navel of old Asia, where four of the most famous rivers of the world, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Sutlej, and the Ganges, rise among gigantic peaks, surrounded by a world of mountains, among which is Kailas, the most famous in the world; for it is sacred in the eyes of hundreds of millions of Hindus, and is the centre of a wreath of monasteries where every morning blasts of conches sound out from the roofs over the lake. Axle and hub of the wheel, which is an image of life, and round which the pilgrims wander along the way of salvation towards the land of perfection. That is Manasarowar, the pearl of all the lakes of the world. Hoary with age when the books of the Veda were written, its blue billows have in the course of centuries seen innumerable troops of faithful Hindus and Tibetans arrive at its banks, there to drink, bathe, and find rest for their souls. There are certainly more beautiful lakes in the world. Its western neighbour, for instance, Langak-tso, is more picturesque. But there is none which unites with natural beauty such an influence on the faith and souls of men. That is why the roar of its waves is so attractive, and a sojourn on its shore so fascinating. Standing up on the convent roof, while silence reigns around, one fancies one hears innumerable wanderers approaching, and the echo of their stumbling feet on the holy path around the lake. And one casts a glance into the night of past centuries, which have left no trace of their aspirations and vain search after an imaginary blessedness. But Tso-mavang remains the same as it was then, and its azure-blue eye sees new generations treading in the footsteps of the old.

After such an hour everything else seems commonplace. Not till the blush of evening flooded the lake with a purple tinge could I tear myself away and go down to my camp on the shore. Once more I turned to Tso-mavang and called out a loud prolonged "Om a hum." Rabsang said nothing, but I could see that he was wondering whether I had become the latest convert of the Lamaistic church, and with the more reason because I had insisted on travelling round the lake in the orthodox direction—southwards by the east bank and northwards by the west bank.

The tracks of 120 yaks were discernible in the sand, which had passed northwards in the morning laden with brick tea. An old Hindu, who was performing the circuit of the lake in the same direction as the Tibetans, begged to be allowed to camp beside us, because he was afraid of robbers; we regaled him with tea, bread, and tobacco, and he asked us to accept a handful of rice. It is singular that the Hindu pilgrims seem to hold the Lamaistic monasteries in veneration; at least I saw them bow before the Lamaistic gods in Tugu-gompa, and place a handful of rice in the bowl which a monk held out to them.

After a temperature of 43.9° in the night the morning air seemed quite warm. A fresh easterly breeze ruffled the surface of the lake, and the foam-tipped waves shone in the sun, but the day was beautiful and I was full of life, and eager to go out upon the lake. The old Hindu said that he had resolved to postpone his pilgrimage and go with us in the boat, but I assured him that we would take no unnecessary ballast. But he followed us on the bank as we rowed through the surf to Camp No. 213, easily recognizable by its old fire-place, and when we steered thence seawards straight towards Tugu-gompa, visible as a white speck in the south-east, he was so eager to go with us that he ran into the water and did not turn back till it reached to his middle. He was certainly a little silly; he had talked nonsense all the evening, though no one had listened to him.

The new line of soundings was marked No. 4 on my map of the lake. Its greatest depth was 249 feet. At the ninth

sounding-station the red metal disc of the current-meter became entangled in the sounding-line. It was torn away from its screws and twisted like a boomerang in mad gyrations down through the crystal-clear water to a depth of 207 feet, there to sleep in the mud of Tso-mavang till the day of judgment. Fortunately it could easily be replaced.

When we landed at the monastery, all our men, and the monks and the pilgrims on the shore, were there to receive us. The first we caught sight of was the old crazy Hindu. His fellow-countrymen had taken it for granted that we must have perished in the storm, and therefore were very astonished to see us come back alive. But as I was now here again, they thought that they might take advantage of it, and asked me to present them one and all with new trousers, a request that I considered very importunate.

On August 10 I sat in my tent door and painted Kailas in different lights. Its white summit stood out cold and bare against a bright blue cloudless sky, and the lake was of a deep, dazzling ultramarine. When a breeze swept over the surface it was in the distance like clear green malachite. After sunset the sky was orange-coloured, and the lake, of just the same colour, reflected the outlines of the mountains in quivering serpentine lines. The evening before, the whole western horizon had glowed with bright red flames.

CHAPTER XLVIII

OUR LAST DAYS ON TSO-MAVANG

At this time Robert had perfected himself more than I in the Tibetan language, and he talked it almost fluently. Therefore, while my whole time was taken up with other work, he was able to obtain information about the country and people, and perform certain tasks I set him. On the left, shorter wall of the vestibule of Tugu-gompa was an inscription for the enlightenment of pilgrims, and this Robert now translated into Hindustani and English. Freely rendered it runs as follows:

Tso-mavang is the holiest place in the world. In its centre dwells a god in human form, who inhabits a tent composed of turquoise and all kinds of precious stones. In the midst of it grows a tree with a thousand branches, and every branch contains a thousand cells in which a thousand lamas live. The lake-tree has a double crown, one rising like a sunshade and shading Kang-rinpoche, the other overshadowing the whole world. Each of the 1022 branches bears an image of a god, and all these images turn their faces towards Gossul-gompa, and in former times all the gods gathered together here. Once golden water was fetched from the lake, and with it the face of Hlobun Rinpoche in Chiu-gompa was gilded, and what was left was used to gild the temple roofs of Tashi-lunpo. In old times the water of the lake flowed over a pass named Pakchu-la to the Ganga-chimbo. Water flows into the lake from all sides, cold, warm, hot, and cool. Water passes from the lake to the Ganga-shei and comes back again. Vapour rises annually from the lake and hovers over it once in the year, and then sinks down into the centre, and the next year the process is repeated. If any one brings up clay from the middle of the lake,

that clay is really gold. The lake is the property of the lake-god. The lake is the central point of the whole world. Sambu Tashi grew out of the lake tree. Sochim Pema Dabge is of very holy, clear, and pure water. The Gyagar Shilki *chhorten* stands in the lake. The palace of the lake-god is in the lake. All the lamas there recite their prayers with one voice. All the gods assemble together in the lake and sit there among *chhortens* of all kinds, embellished with gold and precious stones. The spirit king of the southern land resides here in a golden house, and is not angry when any one comes to wash and purify himself. If we pray to the spirit king of the southern land, we shall be very wealthy and fortunate. Four large rivers and four small flow out of the lake by underground channels. The four large ones are one warm, one cold, one hot, and one cool. (The Karnali, Brahmaputra, Indus, and Sutlej.) If any one washes in the lake he is cleansed from sin and all impurities. If any one washes once in the lake, the sins of his forefathers are forgiven, and their souls are relieved from purgatorial fires. Datping Ngacha came with 500 pilgrims from Kang-rinpoche to wash in the lake. Lo Mato Gyamo met him and begged him to come to Tso-mavang. Datping Ngacha and the pilgrims came with heaps of flowers and strewed them in the lake. Datping Ngacha went three times round the lake and then ascended into heaven.

Of particular interest is the suggestion made here that the four large rivers stream out of Tso-mavang by subterranean passages. As regards the Sutlej this belief is, in my opinion, quite correct. I was told that the fifth Tashi Lama, whose mausoleum we had seen in Tashi-lunpo, once made the pilgrimage to Tso-mavang and went down to the shore at Tugu-gompa to offer a *kadakh* to the lake-god. The *kadakh* remained suspended in the air, that is, it was actually hanging on one of the branches of the holy tree, but as the tree is only visible to Rinpoches and genuine incarnations, the *kadakh* seemed to ordinary mortals to hang alone in the air.

On August 11 we bade a long farewell to the amiable monks of Tugu-gompa, and gave them liberal presents. They accompanied us down to the shore, when we put off on our voyage westwards. Into a large lagoon of the shore, brown and dirty owing to the numerous gulls and wild geese which here wallow in the mud, a brook from Gurla Mandatta runs, and now

discharges 37.8 cubic feet of water in a second. All the way along runs a rubbish heap, the continuation of the pebble terrace on which Tugu-gompa stands. The lake bed consists sometimes of sand, sometimes of detritus—offshoots of the detritus cone of Gurla Mandatta. Large collections of weeds form dark patches. Up above, at the mouths of two valleys of Gurla, are seen foaming streams, and it is strange that they do not debouch into the lake. But the explanation is easy. Twenty to fifty yards from the bank numerous small holes in the sand of the lake bed open and close like the valves of an artery, and the surface of the lake above them bubbles. These are springs. The streams disappear in the detritus cone, and the water runs below over impermeable layers of glacial clay. At the edge of the cone the water comes up again under the surface of the lake. I perceived, then, that I must gauge the rivers at the points where they emerge from the mountain valleys, if I would ascertain the exact amount of the tribute Tso-mavang receives.

Near camp 218, quite close to the shore, a spring came to the surface, and where it welled up it had a temperature of 38.1°, and therefore brought down the cold of the glaciers to the lake. As the melted water of the Gurla glaciers retains its low temperature on its subterranean course, it probably assists in keeping the water of the lake cool during the summer. Whole shoals of fish sported at the surface of the water, and snapped at plumed gnats, which were gathered in thick clouds.

On August 12 I rode with Rabsang and a Tibetan up to the foot of Gurla Mandatta. We crossed the great highway between Tugu-gompa and Purang. A wolf took to flight; occasionally a hare leapt up out of the steppe grass, and locusts flew about noisily. We rode into the mouth of the Namreldi valley, a resort of robbers, and its crystal stream, between walls of solid rock, carried 101 cubic feet of water, as compared to the 37.8 cubic feet at the place where it enters the lake. The rest of the water, therefore, pours into the lake under the detritus. A few miles farther west we halted at the mouth of the Selung-urdu valley, which has a glacier in its

upper part. At half-past nine o'clock the bed was dry, but at half-past one a river with rapids and waterfalls poured down a volume of 63.9 cubic feet of exceedingly muddy water, which reached the lake in the subterranean springs. The view from this elevated spot is magnificent. We have a bird's-eye view of Tso-mavang, and in the west gleams the bright blue Langak-tso. The survey we can here take of the country is very instructive. The denudation cones of Gurla Mandatta, consisting of sand, rubbish, and boulders, extend northwards like inverted spoons; their extremities dip under the surface of the lake, and cause the fluctuating depths sounded on lines 1 and 2. From camp 218 Robert executed a line of soundings at right angles to the bank down to a depth of 190 feet.

Every day with its observations brought me nearer to the solution of the problem I had proposed to myself. As we rode northwards on the 13th along the western shore we dug wells at some places 10 yards from the bank. The ground consisted of alternate layers of sand and clay: on the top, sand; then a layer of decaying vegetable remains; then a foot and a half of sand which rested on clay. A pit 2 feet deep slowly filled with water up to the same level as the surface of the lake. The water permeates the sand and rests on the clay. If this layer of clay stretches, as seems likely, across the narrow isthmus to the shore of Langak-tso, it is evident that the water of Tso-mavang filters through the beds of sand and pebbles to the western lake. I was already convinced that even now when the old canal has ceased to act, an underground connection must exist between the two lakes. But the fact that the water of Tso-mavang is quite sweet is no proof that the lake has an outlet, seeing that it is only a few years since the canal was silted up.

Again we encamped below the hospitable monastery Gossul. On August 15 I rode with Rabsang and a Tibetan across the hilly isthmus between the two lakes in order to get a look at the country on this side also. We ascended sharply to the highest point of the ridge, where there is a fine view over Langak-tso with its picturesque rocky shores and projecting

points and capes, its bays and islands, and its frame of steep mountains. In form it is very different from its neighbour, which is round and has no islands. We stood at a height of 16,033 feet, and therefore were 935 feet above the surface of Manasarowar.* Then we rode down a valley clothed with brushwood, which emerges on to the flat, irregularly curved shore belt. Here are old, very plainly marked, shore lines, the highest 67.9 feet above the level of the lake. When the Langak-tso stood so high it had an outlet to the Sutlej, and the old bed of this river may be seen leading off from the north-eastern corner of the lake.

A strong south wind blew, and rolled the waves to the shore, where I sat a good hour, drawing and making observations. Then we rode again over the isthmus, at its lowest (15,289 feet) and broadest place. A salt swamp, begirt by hills, lies on its eastern half, quite close to the shore of Tso-mavang, with its surface 7.7 feet above that of the lake. In the sand and rubbish between the two are abundant streams of water, passing from the lake to the swamp. The swamp lies in a flat hollow of clay, in which the water evaporates, and the trifling quantities of salt contained in the lake water accumulate. At this place, then, the water of the eastern lake is prevented from seeping through to the western.

The following day we sailed with a favourable wind to the north-western corner of Tso-mavang, where Chiu-gompa stands on a pyramid of rock. This spot, camp No. 219, was to be our headquarters for several days. The outline of Tso-mavang is like that of a skull seen from the front, and we had now to explore the very top. A day of rest was devoted to a preliminary investigation of the channel where several cold and hot springs rise up; two of the latter had temperatures of 117° and 122° respectively, while in testing the third a thermometer graduated up to 150° did not suffice, and the tube burst. A spring of 117° in a walled basin is said to be used as a medical bath, but one must be a Tibetan to stew in water so hot. A small stone cabin beside it serves as a dressing-room. A little farther down the channel is spanned by a bridge constructed

of four beams resting on two stone piers; it is in extraordinarily good condition, and is another proof that the canal contained water not so very long ago. On the piers of the bridge water-marks are still conspicuous 18½ inches above the present stagnant pools, smelling of sulphur and full of slimy weeds, which are fed by springs. Young wild-geese were swimming in one of them, and had great difficulty in protecting themselves from the brown puppy.

Chiu-gompa, the fifth of the eight monasteries of the lake which I visited, is small, and contains fifteen lamas who enter it for life, while the abbot is changed every three years. It owns some yaks, 500 goats, and 100 sheep, which are employed in transporting salt to Purang, where the monks barter it for barley. One monk, a youth twenty years of age, named Tsering Tundup, is one of the Tibetans whom I think of with particularly kind and warm feeling. His mother also lived in the monastery, and looked after the sheep and goats when they were driven in the evening into the penfolds. He was unusually handsome, refined, amiable and obliging, and showed me everything with full explanations. From his small bare cell he could dream and gaze at the holy lake in the east, and could see on the west Langak-tso, despised by the gods; but yet he was melancholy, and on that account we were sympathetic. He acknowledged openly that he was weary of the monotonous life in Chiu-gompa; every day was like the last, and the monks had hard work to procure a scanty subsistence, and must always be prepared for the attacks of robbers. It must be pleasanter to live as we did, and roam about freely among the mountains. He asked me if he might come with us, and I replied that I would willingly take him to Ladak. Then his face brightened, but he begged to be allowed to think over the matter until I returned from my next trip on the lake.

It rained all night, and in the morning everything was wet —even the things in my wind-beaten and torn tent, where little puddles had been formed. But Tsering came with the linen, so I was not so badly off. We had a long voyage

before us, to camp No. 212, the first place we had encamped at on the holy lake. The programme of the excursion also included visits to the three other monasteries, the gauging of the volumes of water in the streams from the north, and the drawing of a map of the northern shore. We therefore took provisions for four days, which Rabsang and Adul were to transport along the bank on horses' backs. We were to meet them at the entrance to the valley Serolung, at Serolung-gompa. This last voyage was to complete my investigation of the lake, but precisely because it was the last it was looked forward to with fear by my men. They thought that I had so long defied the god of the lake that now my time was come, and that he would avenge himself and keep me for ever.

But the morning was beautiful, and when at half-past five we rowed out over the smooth lake, the temperature was 48.6°. The cloud cap of Gurla extended down to the water, and nothing could be seen of the country to the south. The Pundi mountain was covered with snow and had a wintry appearance. At the first sounding-station (66 feet) the tents were seen as white specks hovering above the lake. Chiu-gompa stands proudly on its rocky point, and is a landmark visible from all parts of the lake shore except from the west. At the second station the sounding was more than 130 feet. Shukkur Ali and Tundup Sonam row like galley-slaves, for they hope to finish this line, and then the work will be at an end. Sometimes the boat passes through belts of foam and weed. At the fifth station (161 feet) the tents can still be seen with the glass, but after that they disappear. Gossul's memorable monastery can also be dimly descried on its rock.

"Now we have traversed a third of the way," I said.

"Thank God!" replied Shukkur Ali. "I hope the weather will hold up to-day."

A large fish floated on the water, belly up; fish washed ashore are used by the people as medicine. The depths remain the same; the lake bed is very even. But at the thirteenth point we found 108 feet, and at the fourteenth 180 feet, which indicated a ridge in the lake bed or a cone of

detritus from the foot of the northern mountains. At about an hour's sail from the eastern shore we saw Rabsang and Adul coming up, and they waited for us at the rendezvous. They proposed we should pass the night in a stone cabin at the right side of the mouth of the Serolung valley, but I refused, for pilgrims and tramps are wont to harbour there. Six monks from the convent, old friends of ours, paid me a visit, and four happy, laughing women, black and dirty, came rushing like a whirlwind down the slopes with baskets of fuel on their backs. Puppy had followed Rabsang, and had found at a monastery on the way a little elegant cavalier with a red collar and bells. With a feeling of satisfaction at having completed this last line of soundings, I went to sleep on the sandy shore under the light of the everlasting stars.

Next day I rode with Rabsang 17 miles to the north, in order to measure the volumes of water in the Pachen and Pachung valleys. We arranged to meet the others on the northern shore, whither they were to row with the baggage. Were we long away they were to light a beacon fire on a hill for our guidance. We followed for a time the shore with its banks of mud, small projections, and lagoons, and then we rode through the Semo-tsangpo from the Tokchen valley, and passed on the left hand two small lakes in the midst of rich pasturage, where a number of kiangs grazed, glared at us, pricked up their ears, and ran away at a slow gallop; then we crossed the *tasam*, or the great trunk-road, and rode up the sharply sculptured Pachen valley, with a foaming river carrying 69.9 cubic feet of water. Then we rode westwards, up and down hills, and enjoyed a new view of the holy lake with Gurla Mandatta in the background. The Pachung river carried 83.3 cubic feet of water. When our work was done we rode south-westwards. Wild asses were on the meadows; they are nearly tame, for no one puts an end to life on the shores of the holy lake. Thirty mares stood on a mound guarded by a stallion; the sun was sinking, and perhaps this is how these animals prepare for the dangers of the night. Now and again a mare left the group and made a circuit about her sisters, but

the stallion ran after her immediately and forced her to return to the others. This game was frequently repeated, and it seemed to me that the mares were making sport of the stallion.

We ride over swampy meadows and small sandhills; nothing can be seen of the lake; we should like to hear its waves roaring under the south-west breeze, but new hills always crop up in front of us. At last we catch sight of the smoke of the camp-fire. Adul had caught a kiang foal four months old, which was ill and kept always turning round. The mother came to look after it in the night, but gave it up for lost, and it died soon after.

August 20 was spent in surveying a map of a part of the northern shore which is very slightly curved, and in a sounding excursion on the lake out to a depth of 154 feet. While the surface water had a temperature 55.6° everywhere, with an air temperature about constant, the temperature at the bottom sank from 56.1° to 46° at the depth of 154 feet.

We gradually began to suffer want. The collops which Adul tried to pass off on me on the morning of the 21st were decidedly bad, and therefore landed in Puppy's stomach. As Rabsang and I rode northwards to Pundi-gompa, the temperature was 56° and really too warm, so that a shower of rain was not unpleasant. Pundi lies on a rocky ledge in a ravine; its abbot is eighty years old, and has eight monks under him. One was a Chinaman from Pekin, who had lived forty years in the convent and had become a thorough Tibetan, though he had not forgotten his mother tongue. From there, too, there is a splendid view over the lake. As we were about to ride down to camp No. 222 on the shore, a messenger came from Robert with the news that the authorities in Parka had refused to provide us with transport animals or assist us in any way, for they had never heard that we were permitted to spend a whole month on the lake. He also said that our Ladakis were much frightened by all kinds of stories of robbers which were current in the neighbourhood, so that every one was anxious for my presence.

The camp was quite close to the monastery Langbonan, at

the mouth of the Gyuma-chu. After we had measured this river and ascertained that it discharged 73.8 cubic feet of water, we had tracked up all the waters pouring into Manasarowar on the surface, and we found that the whole volume was 1094.8 cubic feet in a second, or 94,590,000 cubic feet in twenty-four hours, which would make a cube measuring nearly 456 feet each way. But how much water flows to the lake by underground passages which we could not measure? Probably a volume considerably in excess of the surface water; for Manasarowar lies in a trough between hugh mountains which are constantly feeding the subterranean springs. At any rate the surplus water, so far as it is not lost by evaporation, filtrates through subterranean passages to the Langak-tso, which lies lower.

On the 22nd we again rowed straight out from the bank into the lake till we reached a place where the depth was 135 feet, and then sailed back with a favourable wind to the starting-point. It was the last time that I sank my lead in the holy water, and I was quite convinced that I should never do it again, for I had now 138 soundings, evenly distributed over the lake and affording ample material for the construction of an isobathic map. It was comical to hear Shukkur Ali when I remarked to him that this was our last voyage on Tso-mavang. He held his hands before his face as if he were about to pray, and said solemnly that in spite of all dangers "we had had the good fortune to bring our work to a successful conclusion by the favour of Allah, the favour of the Sahib, the favour of the papa and the mamma of the Sahib, and the favour of all his relations." I ventured to remark that he had forgotten the favour of the lake god, but he dismissed the suggestion with a wave of the hand, and said he had no more faith in the god.

Afterwards I rode with Rabsang up to the monastery Langbo-nan, while the others went on to Chiu-gompa. I shall omit here a description of this convent, where the most remarkable sight was the twelve-year-old abbot Tsering, an intelligent, frank, and lively boy, with sharp bright eyes, white teeth, a fresh healthy complexion, and an attractive appearance. He sat on

a divan before a lacquered table in his library, called *tsemchung*, and showed a great interest in all my plans, glanced into my sketch-book, tried my field-glass, and asked me for a couple of pencils. During the hour I spent in his cell we became good friends, and when at length I bade him farewell we little thought that we should meet again only a year later.

As we made the round of the monastery we came in the gallery of the court upon a poor fellow who lay ill and seemed to be suffering. I asked him how he was, and he told me that on August 18, the day when Rabsang and Adul came to meet us, he was taking eleven mules and two horses laden with *tsamba* and barley to Parka, the Gova of which was the owner of the caravan. Where the Pachung river enters the eastern lagoon he was attacked at eleven o'clock in the morning by twelve robbers, who rushed down from the direction of the Pachung valley. They were all mounted, and armed with guns, swords, and spears, had two spare horses for provisions, and wore masks on their faces. They dismounted in a moment, threw a mantle over his head, tied his hands behind his back, and cleared him out, taking among other things 400 rupees, and then they rode off again to the Pachung valley, which Rabsang and I had hurriedly visited the next day. He then summoned help by shouting, and in a very pitiable condition found refuge in Langbo-nan. He showed us some deep stabs in his legs, his skin coat, and the saddle, which had suffered severely when he made a desperate attempt to defend himself. This was the incident which had so alarmed our Ladakis.

The way from here to Chiu-gompa is charming. Perpendicular, sometimes overhanging rocks of green and red schist fall to the shore, which here has a shingly beach only 20 yards broad. Two gigantic boulders stand like monuments on the shore, and on the rocky walls we see black caves and hermits' dwellings, and we often pass the usual three stones on which tea-kettles of pilgrims have boiled. Farther to the west the projections form a series of recesses in lighter tones; at one of these cliffs a new and fascinating view is displayed. A water mark lying 5½ feet above the present level of the lake is

very easily recognized. On the rocky pinnacles eagles sit motionless as statues, watching for prey.

Chergip-gompa is built on a terrace in the broad mouth of a valley. It is a small, poor monastery, but it has its *lhakang* and its vestibule with a large bronze bell, in which the six holy characters are cast. When the bell is rung at morning and evening the unfathomable truth is borne on the waves of sound over the lake, which, with its blue surface and its background of the snowfields of Gurla Mandatta, forms a charming landscape as seen from the court of the monastery. But its sound is heard by no one but Chergip's single monk. Poor man, what must be his feelings in winter evenings when storms sweep the drifting snow over the ice of Tso-mavang!

I remained with him fully two hours, for he had much to tell. He had travelled far, had been at Selipuk and the Nganglaring-tso, and offered to conduct me thence in twenty days to the Dangra-yum-tso; he had no suspicion that I was roaming about in the forbidden land under a political ban. But he revived my desire to visit the great unknown country to the north of the holy river. I was full of thoughts, full of plans, and full of an insatiable *desiderium incogniti* which never left me in peace, when at length I departed from the eighth and last monastery of Tso-mavang as the evening spread its dark veil over the lake I had conquered.

We had still a long way to go to the camp. At the last mountain spur stands a *chhorten*, from which our fire was visible. Soon we sat again among our companions. Late at night two horsemen rode past our camp; the watchmen called out "Who's there?" but they made no answer. Then Rabsang awoke and thoughtlessly sent a bullet after the unknown men, being convinced that they were robbers. My men had reached such a pitch of nervousness that they saw robbers everywhere.

This was our last night on the shore of the Tso-rin-poche, the "holy lake," and I listened sadly to the song of the surf dying away as the wind fell.

CHAPTER XLIX

ADVENTURES ON LANGAK-TSO

I HAVE not interrupted the description of my life on the revered lake with notices of our political troubles. Suffice it to say that we succeeded in staying there a whole month. Mounted and other messengers often came to make complaints, and then my men simply replied: "The Sahib is out on the lake, catch him if you can; he is a friend of the lake god, and can stay as long as he likes among the branches of the holy tree." And when I came back again they had gone off. In consequence of the boat trips they could not control my movements, but when we encamped by Chiu-gompa they became more energetic. During my absence came messenger after messenger with orders that I must at once betake myself to Parka and continue my journey thence to Ladak. On August 23 I sent Robert and Rabsang to Parka to make terms with the authorities, but they would not under any circumstances allow me to visit Langak-tso, my next stage. If I liked to stay a month or a year at Chiu-gompa it was nothing to them, for the monastery was not in their district, but the western lake was in their jurisdiction. They advised that I should come as soon as possible to Parka for my own sake, and would send in the morning fifteen yaks to carry my luggage.

But I wished to see Langak-tso at any cost. So when the fifteen yaks arrived next morning, I quickly made up my mind to send Tsering, Rabsang, and four men with the baggage to Parka, while Robert and the other six men would go with me to Langak-tso. Our own six horses and the last mule from

Poonch could easily carry the boat and our bit of luggage. The yaks were laden and my men disappeared behind the hills. My own small caravan had orders to camp on the shore of Langak-tso where the old channel enters. I went with Robert and two men on foot and executed a series of exact levellings over the isthmus separating the two lakes. At the same time I drew a map of the course of the channel. The measuring tape was nailed fast to an oar which Robert carried; the theodolite I carried myself. The distance between the pole and the instrument amounted to 55 yards, and was measured with tapes by our two assistants. The pole was placed on an iron dish that it might not sink into the soft ground.

The lakes were visited in 1812 by Moorcroft, who found no connecting channel. In October 1846 Henry Strachey found there an arm of the lake 100 feet broad and 3 feet deep. Landor declared that any connection was inconceivable, for, according to him, the isthmus was 300 feet high at its lowest part. Ryder found in the late autumn of 1904 no water running out of Manasarowar, but he heard from the natives that a little water passed through the channel during the rainy season. Sherring also saw no running water, but he thought it probable that the lake overflowed after rainy summers. As for me, I followed the bed of the channel from one lake to the other and found that in the year 1907 no water flowed from the eastern into the western lake, and in 1908 the condition was the same, though both my visits occurred in the rainy season. There must be very heavy falls of rain before Manasarowar can overflow, for the highest point of the channel bed lies more than 6½ feet above the level of the eastern lake.

The circumstance that different travellers in different years have given different accounts is, however, very easily explained. All depends on the precipitation: if it is abundant, the surface of Manasarowar rises; if it is very abundant its water drains off to the Langak-tso (Rakas-tal). If the summer is dry, as in the year 1907, the Langak-tso receives no water through the channel, but certainly by subterranean passages. On the whole, both these lakes are falling like the other lakes of Tibet, and

the time is approaching when the subterranean outlet will be cut off and both lakes will be salt.

As we deliberately measured the channel and came to its highest point from which its bed dips towards the west, I threw a farewell glance at Tso-mavang, and experienced a feeling of bereavement at the thought that I must now leave its shores, and in all probability for ever. For I had known this gem of lakes in the light of the morning red and in the purple of sunset, in storms, in howling hurricanes when the waves rose mountain high, in fresh southerly breezes when the waves sparkled like emeralds, in full sunshine when the lake was smooth as a mirror, in the silver beams of the moon when the mountains stood out like white spectres after the dull yellow light of evening was extinguished, and in peaceful nights when the stars twinkled as clearly on the smooth surface of the lake as above in the vault of heaven. I had passed a memorable month of my life on this lake, and had made friends with the waves and become intimately acquainted with its depths. To this day I can hear the melodious splash of the raging surf, and still Tso-mavang lingers in my memory like a fairy tale, a legend, a song.

We went on westwards along narrow creeks and pools of stagnant water, but when the evening had become so dusky that I could no longer read the figures on the measuring pole, we gave up work, marked the last fixed point, and made for the camp, which we reached in complete darkness.

In the morning the work was continued. We had had a minimum of 22.6° in the night, and a violent south-west storm rendered it difficult to read the instruments. The hundred-and-fourth point was fixed at length at the edge of the water of Langak-tso. I have no space here to analyse the results. The channel runs west-north-west, and the line measured is 10,243 yards long, or twice as long as represented on the most recent maps. The surface of Langak-tso lay 44 feet below that of Tso-mavang, which agrees very well with the difference of height on Ryder's map, namely 50 feet. There is no water beyond the ninety-fourth fixed point in the bed. The Tibetans related a legend concerning the origin of the channel. Two

large fishes in Tso-mavang were deadly enemies and chased each other. One was beaten, and in order to escape he darted right through the isthmus, and the windings of the channel bed show the course of the flying fish.

The morning of August 26 was dull, damp, and cold. Heavy clouds floated over the earth, heralds of the monsoon rains, and Langak-tso looked anything but inviting for a sail. But we had the whole day before us, and any moment horsemen might come from Parka, take us by the neck and lead us back, whether we liked it or not, to the path of duty. Langak-tso has a very irregular outline. Its chief basin in the south is begirt by rocks, in the north there is a smaller expansion, and between the two runs a contracted channel. All we could venture to do was to row over the small basin westwards and then to the south-east, to a place on the eastern shore whither our camp could be moved. It could be done in a few hours, so we took nothing but the mast and sail.

Tundup Sonam and Ishe were my boatmen, and we set out at half-past five o'clock. We were at first in the lee of a promontory, but when we had passed it the whole lake came down upon us with rolling, foaming billows, showers of spray, and threatening surge. The waves were crowded together in the narrows to leeward, and assumed curious irregular forms. Among them tossed masses of water-weed; the water was bright green and as clear and sweet as that of Tso-mavang. We are a little beyond the promontory; would it not be better to turn back? No; never turn back, never give in; still forwards! We were wet, but we kept our equilibrium and parried the cunning assaults of the rolling waves. "Row hard and we shall soon get into the shelter of the great point on the western shore." I even managed to take soundings, and found that the greatest depth was 54½ feet; the lake bottom was almost level. We had fought with the waves for four hours before we landed on the north side of the promontory, where we were sheltered from the wind.

Here we draw the boat to land and reconnoitre. The cape runs north-eastwards, and is covered with driftsand which is

in constant motion. On the shore plain to the south-west yellow sandspouts move about, whirling like corkscrews in the direction of the wind, and our promontory receives its share of this load of sand. On the north the dune is very steep; from time to time fresh sand falls down the slope and slips into the lake, where the waves sweep it away. From the sharp ridge of the dune the driftsand is blown like a dense plume to the lake, and the water is tinged with yellow for quite 200 yards in the direction of the wind by myriads of grains of sand, which fall to the bottom and build up a foundation under water on which the promontory can extend out into the lake. The wind has been strong, and now we have a storm. Patience! We cannot go back. The driftsand now floats so thickly over the lake that the eastern and northern shores are invisible; we might be sitting on a dune in the heart of the Takla-makan desert.

We slipped down to the sheltered side of the dune, but here, out of the wind, it was still worse. We were enveloped in clouds of sand which penetrated everywhere, into our eyes, ears, and noses, and irritated the skin where it came into contact with the body. The moaning howl of the storm was heard above and around us. My oarsmen slept or strolled about, but their footprints were at once obliterated by the wind. I played with the sand like a child—let it roll down the lee-side, built a small peninsula, which was immediately destroyed by the waves, and a harbour mole, which the sea beat over and broke up—and watched how new layers and clumps of dead seaweed appeared on the sand slope, and how the dry sand formed falls and cascades as it rolled down. But the storm did not abate.

We lay waiting there for four hours. On the eastern shore our men had moved the camp a little farther south. We saw the tents quite plainly. Should we venture to creep along the shore southwards so as to reach a point opposite the camp? Out beyond the promontory the dark-green lake ran uncomfortably high, but we were a match for the waves—the men had only to put their weight on to the oars. So we crept along

the shore, where we got some shelter, but we had to be careful that we were not carried out into the heavy seas. After rowing round two points we landed on the lee-side of a third, where the boat was drawn ashore again. Heavy seas with thundering, towering waves dashed against the southern side of the point, so that we could go no farther, for no pilot would encounter such billows in a canvas boat. I stood on the top of the promontory and enjoyed the fine spectacle. Robert's tent shone brightly in the setting sun. We saw the men, the horses grazing on the bank, and the smoke of the camp-fire beaten down by the storm. The crossing would barely take an hour, but between us and them yawned the dark-green abyss of tyrannical, all-conquering waves.

The sun sets and we still sit and wait, confused by the rush of the spirits of the air and water. This time they have played us a pretty trick, and we have been caught. To the north rises Kang-rinpoche, lofty and bright as a royal crown. Its summit is like a *chhorten* on the grave of a Grand Lama. Snow and ice with vertical and slightly inclined fissures and ledges form a network like the white web of a gigantic spider on the black cliffs.

And the day, a long day of waiting, neared its inevitable close. Shadows lengthened out over the foaming waves, the sun set, and the Pundi mountain, our old friend of Tso-mávang, glowed like fire in the sunset. Clouds of a deep blood-red colour, with edges of orange, and tinted above with reddest gold, hovered over its summit. It was as though the earth had opened and volcanic forces had burst forth. The hours passed by, the glow died out, the outlines of Pundi became indistinct and were at length swallowed up in the darkness. We were in the dark while the camp-fire blazed on the eastern shore. Our hopes were now centred on the night and the moon. The storm had raged thrice twenty-four hours, and it must end some time; but it was just as strong. And as it was useless to wait, and I could not appease my gnawing hunger with a piece of bread and a cup of tea, I wrapped myself in the sail, burrowed into the sand, and fell into a sound sleep.

The rain pelting down on the sail woke me twice, and about four o'clock in the morning the cold thoroughly roused me. A dreary, grey, rainy outlook. But Ishe proposed that we should try to get over, for the storm had slightly abated in consequence of the rain. We first made sure that the tackle was in good order, and then stepped into the boat and rowed out along the sheltered side of the promontory. But scarcely had the nose of the boat passed beyond the point when it received a shock that made all its joints crack. "Row, row as hard as you can," I yelled through the howling storm; "we shall get over before the boat is full. It is better to be wet than suck our thumbs for twenty-four hours more." To the south, 52° E., the tent canvas shone white in the morning grey. We strayed far out of our course, but cut the waves cleanly, and steered towards the surf. We just managed to get over. We were received on the other side by our men, who helped us to draw the boat ashore and had fire and breakfast ready for us.

Namgyal had returned from Parka and brought news that the Gova threatened to drive away my men in order to force me to leave Langak-tso. Bluff, however, has no effect on me. A more serious matter was that Puppy had not been seen for forty-eight hours, and that Shukkur Ali, who had gone the morning before to Chiu-gompa in search of her, had not been heard of since. Puppy at length found her way into camp herself, and then it was Shukkur Ali who was missing.

On the 28th the storm continued. We afterwards heard from Tibetans that stormy weather frequently prevails on Langak-tso, and the lake is agitated, when Tso-mavang is smooth and calm. Tundup Sonam concluded that Tso-mavang was a pet of the gods, while demons and devils ruled over Langak-tso. We had heard a tale in Gossul-gompa that the preceding winter five Tibetans, armed with swords and guns, had crossed the ice to reach Parka by a shorter way, but in the middle of the lake the ice had given way, and all five were dragged down by the weight of their weapons to the bottom.

I wished for fine weather that I might be able to cross over the lake to the islands. As, however, we were obliged to give up all thoughts of a voyage, I determined to pass round the lake and at any rate draw an outline map of it. We commenced, then, with the eastern shore, which makes a regular curve towards the east. The white mule from Poonch carried the boat. Some Ovis Ammons were seen on the rocks, which Tundup Sonam stalked unsuccessfully. Shukkur Ali turned up again as cool as a cucumber, having searched in vain for Puppy, which was snoring in my tent in most excellent condition.

August 29. We go to sleep amidst the roaring of the waves and the howling of the storm, and awake again to the same uproar. It is always in our ears as we ride along the shore. We might be at the foot of a waterfall. Now we follow the south shore westwards. Here the cliffs are almost everywhere precipitous, and the rocks are porphyry, granite, and schist; the shore strip is extremely narrow and steep, and is divided into sharply marked terraces. It descends right down to great depths, and shallow, gradually sloping, places are not to be found. A human skull lay in a bay bobbing up and down in the waves, and not far off were other parts of a skeleton. Was it one of the men who had been drowned in the winter? At this discovery my men conceived a still greater aversion to Langak-tso, which even took human life. I perceived that they were wondering what further foolhardiness I might indulge in.

A sharp-pointed peninsula running north-westwards delayed us. On the bay beyond a caravan was camping, and we were glad to meet Tibetans again when all others had withdrawn from us; and they were glad to meet a European who had been at the Luma-ring-tso, their home. But they could not understand why we passed round all projections and went right round all the bays, instead of following the direct road running a little farther to the south. One of them held out his hands towards me with the fingers spread out, and said that the south shore of the lake had as many indentations.

When I told him that I wished to draw a map of the lake, he said that it was of no consequence what the shore was like, as only egg-gatherers came there.

When we had passed two projecting points we encamped at the extremity of the cape which lies in a line with the southernmost island. It was stormy, but here we found shelter under a cliff with a streamer pole on the top. Stone walls, rags, and eggshells were evidence of the visits of men. On the east and west of the cape were open bays with heavy seas, and to the north, 19° E., we saw the southern point of the island—a dark precipitous rock, rising like a huge roll of bread from the waves. We had already heard of this island, Lache-to, on which the wild geese lay their eggs in May, and are robbed of them by men from Parka who come over the ice. I could not therefore omit to visit it. The island lay quite near. We would return immediately, and Adul might begin to roast the wild-goose which Tundup had shot on the march. We wanted no provisions, but Robert advised Ishe to take a bag of *tsamba* with him, lest he should have to wait too long for his dinner.

These two men took the oars when we put off. The shelter of the cape was deceptive. Two minutes from the bank I tried to take a sounding, but the line made a great curve before it reached the bottom, for the storm drove the boat northwards. Then we fell upon another device: the boatmen had only to hold their oars in the air and let the wind carry the boat along. But a little farther out we could not sail so easily, for the wave system of the eastern open part of the lake came into collision with that from the west. Here the waves rose into hillocks and pyramids, and had to be negotiated with the oars. We rapidly drew near to the island, and its rocks became higher and looked threateningly dark and dangerous. When we were close to the southern point I perceived that it was impossible to land there. The bank of rubbish and blocks was very steep, and we and the boat would have been dashed in pieces in the foaming breakers. The situation was critical. Robert wished to land on the lee-side of the northern

point, but that would have been risky, for the storm swept unchecked along the sides of the island, and if we did not get under the land at the right moment we should be driven out into the open lake at a distance of two days' voyage from the northern shore. We rocked up and down on soft green crystal. I steered close to the eastern bank, where the waves were just as high. Here we had no choice. I turned the bow towards the land, and the men rowed for all they were worth. A nasty billow threw us ashore. Robert jumped out, slipped, and got a ducking. Ishe hurried up to help him. Three billows broke over me before I got to land. We were all three drenched, but we were glad to have firm ground under our feet, and to have reached the island safely in spite of the treacherous storm which might have driven us past this open roadstead.

Then Robert and I went round the island while Ishe collected fuel. Though we could only walk slowly over the detritus, we took but twenty-five minutes to go round the island and ascertain its form by compass bearings. It is longish, runs from north to south, and consists of a single rock falling on all sides steeply to the water. During our walk the wind dried us. Then I drew a panorama of Gurla Mandatta, and after that the spot of earth to which fate had led us prisoners was subjected to a closer investigation. At the north-eastern foot of the elevation is a rather flat pebbly plateau. Here the wild geese breed in spring, and here lay still several thousand eggs, in twos, threes, or fours, in a nest of stones and sand.

That was a discovery. Ishe had a bag of *tsamba*, but that was all. There was every probability that we should have to stay the night here, and now we had a quite unexpected store of provisions to last for months. And some time this persistent wind must cease. We played at Robinson Crusoe, and found our situation very advantageous. But the egg collecting was the most interesting. The eggs were pretty and appetizing as they lay half embedded in the sand, and I pictured to myself the happy cackling that must go on in the

spring when the goose mothers sit with expectant hearts on the hard nests, and the sun floods Gurla Mandatta with a sea of light.

We broke two. They were rotten. We tried others which lay in the shade and deeper in the sand. They gave out a horrible stench when the shell broke with a crack on a stone. But of about 200 eggs we broke, we found eight which were edible, and we did not want more. We helped Ishe to collect dry plants lying on the slopes, and at sunset we had a huge heap which we had piled within a small ring fence. In the middle the fire was lighted, and we sat leaning against the wall which sheltered us from the wind. We were warm and comfortable, and our satisfaction reached its height when Ishe's store of *tsamba* was divided into three equal portions, and was eaten out of a wooden bowl with the hand in place of a spoon. The greatest inconvenience was that we had no other vessel but Ishe's small wooden bowl, and therefore whenever one of us wanted a drink he had to tramp down to the shore.

The storm still howled over the rock and through the holes and crannies of the wall. Then the thought shot through my mind: "Is the boat moored securely? If it should be carried away! Then we are lost. Ah, but it may be cast ashore on the northern bank, and our men may fetch it and come across to the island. No, it will be filled with water, and be sunk by the weight of the zinc plates of the centre-boards. But then we can mount in the morning to the southern point and make our people understand by signs that we want provisions. We have drifted to the island in eighteen minutes. They can make a raft with the tent poles and stays, load it with provisions, and let it drift with the wind to the island. And we may find more fresh eggs."

Such were the thoughts that Robert and I exchanged while Ishe was feeling about in total darkness at the landing-place. "What if we have to stay here till the lake freezes over, four months hence?" I said. But at this moment we heard Ishe's step in the sand, and he calmed us with the assurance that both the boat and the oars were safe.

Then we talked together again and kept up the fire. The storm had abated, but sudden gusts came down from all quarters. We inspected the water, and found that we could make for the mainland without danger. But first we took all the remaining fuel and piled it up into a blazing bonfire, which shone like a huge beacon over the lake. If any Tibetan saw it, he must have thought that an enchanted fire was burning on the desolate island.

The moon was high when we put off and the lake was still rough. But soon the black cape where our camp stood was seen on the southern shore against the dim background of mountains. In the middle of the sound the depth was 113 feet. We shouted with all our might, and were soon answered by a fire on the point, to which our people had come down. And the roasted wild-goose, which had waited so long for us, and a cup of hot tea tasted delicious in the early hours of morn. And still more delightful was it to creep into bed after our short visit to the goose island, which raised its dark, mysterious, dolphin-like ridge in the moonlight. Never again would my foot tread its peaceful strand.

CHAPTER L

THE SOURCE OF THE SUTLEJ

WE had scarcely dressed in the morning before the storm raged again. Galsan and a gova from Parka overtook us here. The former brought provisions, the latter had strict orders from his chief, Parka Tasam, to tell me that if I did not at once betake myself to Parka, he would send off all my baggage to Langak-tso, and force me to move on to Purang. But the gova himself was a jovial old fellow, and he received my answer that if Parka Tasam ventured to meddle with my boxes, he should be immediately deposed. If he kept quiet a couple of days, I would come to Parka, and the rather that I found it impossible to navigate the lake at this season of the year.

Then we marched on westwards, in and out of the bays and round all the projections produced by a mountain elevation north of Gurla, which prolongs its ramifications to the lake. The constantly changing views, as we wind in and out and wander between land and water, are indescribably beautiful and charming. The two large islands lying far out in the lake we see wherever we may be. One is named Dopserma; other water-birds breed there, but no geese. In winter yaks and sheep are driven over the ice to the island, where there is good pasturage. When cattle disease rages in the country the animals on Dopserma do not suffer.

We passed round the sharp-pointed westernmost bay in a furious storm and blinding clouds of sand, and encamped on the shore again. The same agreeable weather continued also on the last day of August as we travelled north-eastwards and

saw the Langak-tso in a new and beautiful aspect. The air was now clear, Kang-rinpoche and Gurla Mandatta were unclouded, and stood as sentinels above the lakes. We passed the point where Tundup Sonam, Ishe, and I had waited so long, and by the sand-dune where we had lain four hours.

At the north-western bay we cross the old bed of the Sutlej, consisting of treacherous, quaking bog or dry, hard clay; it is broad, has no terraces, and has been much degraded and smoothed down by deflation and driftsand in later times. Two springs rise up in the middle, and flow in the direction of the lake. Westwards the bed seems quite level, but actually it rises slowly and evenly to a flat culmination, on the other side of which it dips down towards the Indus.

Now it had become dark, and we rode hour after hour among low hills and dunes and over meadows and water channels. I thought we had lost our way, when the bells of grazing cattle were heard, a fire appeared, and Rabsang came to meet us with a lantern in order to lead us to the village Parka, where my tent was set up in a courtyard.

During the much-needed day of rest we allowed ourselves in Parka, I negotiated now and then with the govas of the neighbourhood. They asked me to set off definitely for the west next day, and I promised to do so, but on the condition that I might stay three days in Khaleb, half a day's journey to the west. They consented without inquiring into my further intentions. I wished, be it known, to pass round the holy mountain by the pilgrim road, but saw that the authorities would never grant their permission. It could be done only by stratagem.

Here I received a second very kind letter from Mr. Cassels, who happened to be in Gyanima on official business. Unfortunately the force of circumstances prevented us meeting. He gave me a pleasant surprise with three packets of tea, which were the more welcome as I had latterly had to put up with brick tea.

Here also the truth of the report that had so long followed

us, that six Chinese and Tibetan officials from Lhasa had been sent to bring me to reason, was at length made clear. The report was certainly true, but when the gentlemen on reaching Saka-dzong heard that I had marched on westwards some time before, they simply turned back again.

I obtained all kinds of information about the two lakes and their periodical outlets, from Tibetans who had long lived in the country. Four years before some water had flowed from Tso-mavang to Langak-tso, which confirms Ryder's statement. Twelve years ago the outflow had been so abundant that the channel could not be passed except by the bridge. The channel is sometimes called Ngangga, sometimes Ganga. The water of Langak-tso is said to drain off underground, and to appear again at a place in the old bed called Langchen-kamba, and this water is said to be the true source of the Sutlej, and to find its way to the large streams which form this river, called in Tibetan Langchen-kamba. Twelve years and forty-eight years ago the spring in the old bed is said to have emitted much more water than now. Sherring collected similar data in 1905.

Langak-tso is said to have been so poisonous in former times that any one who drank of its water died, but since the holy fish broke through the isthmus and passed into the lake, the water has been sweet. Langak-tso freezes in the beginning of December, half a month sooner than its eastern neighbour, and the freezing proceeds slowly and in patches, whereas Tso-mavang freezes over in an hour. Langak-tso also breaks up half a month before Tso-mavang. Both have ice 3 feet thick. In winter the surface of Tso-mavang falls 20 inches beneath the ice, which consequently is cracked and fissured, and dips from the shore; but Langak-tso sinks only one or two thirds of an inch. This shows that it receives water constantly from the eastern lake, but only parts with a trifling quantity in winter.

With regard to the goose island, I was told that three men are commissioned by the Devashung to settle on the island as soon as the wild-geese arrive, to protect them from wolves and

foxes. They receive 8 rupees, a sheep, and a lump of butter as wages. At this time, in May, the ice is still 2 feet thick, but the egg-gatherers must take care that they are not cut off from the mainland by a storm. Some years ago it happened that two watchmen were isolated on the island in this way. They lived there eight months, subsisting on eggs and green food, and returned over the ice next winter as soon as the lake was frozen over. But one of them was so enfeebled that he died on reaching Parka.

After a lively feast held by the Ladakis in the evening, we rode on September 2 north-westwards, accompanied by an old grey-headed gova, who had become a particular friend of mine. The weather was fine, but we now felt biting cold in the morning, much as at home on the islets off the coast when the yellow leaves have fallen and a thin sheet of ice has spread over the inlets. All Parka was on foot to witness our departure. With us set out a high lama whom I had known in Leh. His retinue looked well in their yellow dresses against the grey and green ground. He had been in Shigatse, and had lately made the circuit of the holy mountain. During the march we waded through the rivers Dam-chu, Sung-chu, La-chu, and Khaleb, which together carried about 350 cubic feet of water per second to Langak-tso.

The nearer we came to the holy mountain, the less imposing it appeared; it was finest from Langak-tso. In form it resembles a tetrahedron set on a prism. From the middle of its white top a belt of ice falls precipitously down, and below it stands a stalagmite of ice, on to which a thick stream of water pours from above. The stream splits up into glittering drops of spray and thin sheets of water—a grand spectacle, which one could watch with pleasure for hours.

Our camp on the Khaleb moor had the advantage of being far from the haunts of men—a very necessary condition, for here I contrived to make three excursions without permission. The second of these took a whole day, September 6, and its aim was the old bed of the Sutlej. Where we reached it, the bed seemed to contain stagnant water both to the east and

west, and the ground was quite level. At the place which seemed highest, we tested it with the boiling-point thermometer and found that it stood about 30 feet above the lake. Following the bed westwards we come first to a large pool of sweet water with large quantities of duck and water-weeds, then to a series of freshwater swamps connected by channels, and at length to a brook, which flows slowly south-westwards. The brook pours into a large freshwater pool, No. 2, which has no visible outlet. But when we proceed farther west to the point where the bed is contracted between walls of solid rock, we come upon two springs forming a new brook, which flows through a clearly marked valley to the south-west. I am convinced that this water filtrates underground from Langak-tso. A year later I followed the old bed a day's march farther west, and found at Dölchu-gompa permanent springs of abundant water, which likewise well up on the bottom of the bed. From here and all along its course through the Himalayas the Tibetans call the Sutlej Langchen-kamba, the Elephant river; the hill on which the convent Dölchu-gompa is built is supposed to bear some resemblance to an elephant, and hence the name. The spring at Dölchu is called Langchen-kabab, or the mouth out of which the Elephant river comes, just as the Brahmaputra source is the Tamchok-kabab, or the mouth out of which the Horse river comes, and the Indus source is the Singi-kabab, or the mouth from which the Lion river comes. The fourth in the series is the Mapchu-kamba, the Peacock river or Karnali. The Tibetans assert that the source of the Sutlej is at the monastery Dölchu, not in the Himalayas or the Trans-Himalaya, from which, however, it receives very voluminous tributaries. They are also convinced that the source water of the Langchen-kamba originates from Langak-tso. And I would draw particular attention to the fact that the first of the two holy springs which pour their water into the Tage-tsangpo is also called Langchen-kamba (see p. 106), a proof that in old times the source was supposed to lie to the east of Tso-mavang.

Now I advise any one who takes no interest in the source

of the Sutlej to skip the following quotation. During my stay in Kioto in December 1908, Mr. Ogawa, Professor of Geography in the University there, showed me a collection of Chinese books. One of them, *Shui-tao-ti-kang*, or *The Elements of Hydrography*, is a compilation of the author Chi-Chao Nan in the 26th year of the Emperor Kien Lung, that is, the year 1762, and in this work, Book 22, is the following communication concerning the source of the Sutlej, which Professor Ogawa was kind enough to translate for me literally:[1]

The Kang-ka-kiang comes out from Kang-ti-ssu-shan, on the south-east of which there stands Lang-chuan-ka-pa-pu-shan (= Langchen-kabab), magnificent like an elephant. The relief is gradually accentuated more and more towards the south-western frontiers, and culminates at Kang-ti-ssu-shan (= Kailas). The mountain has a circumference of more than 140 li. On all sides the mountain forms precipitous walls more than 1000 feet high above the surrounding mountains, and accumulated snow seems as if hung on cliffs. Hundreds of springs pour down from the top, but flow under the ground on the foot of the mountain. It is situated in the extreme west of the Tsang region, 310 li north-east of Ta-ko-la-cheng in A-li, more than 5590 li south-west of Si-ning-fu in Shensi province. Its longitude is 36°4′ W., and its latitude 30°5′ N. In olden times the place was unknown, but can be doubtfully identified with A-nok-ta-shan in the annotation of Shui-ching. In the neighbourhood there are four high mountains, of which the southern is called Lang-chuan-ka-pa-pu-shan, lying 250 li south-by-east of Kang-ti-ssu-shan, and 270 li east of Ta-ko-la-cheng. The natives call it so, because the form of the mountain resembles an elephant. On the east of this mountain there stands Ta-mu-chu-ko-ka-pa-pu-shan (= Ţamchok-kabab), which is the source of the Ya-lu-tsang-pu river (= Yere-tsangpo or Brahmaputra). Springs come out from the northern foot of the mountain, and accumulate into a lake (35°5′ W., and 29°1′ N.). The water flows north-westwards for 70 li, and receives a stream coming from the north-east. The stream lies in the mountains 80 li north-east of Lang-chuan-ka-pa-pu. Two streams flow westwards from the mountain and turn north-westwards after their junction. It now takes a sinuous course for 60 li, turns south-westwards, and joins the main river. This is a source.

[1] I have only omitted a couple of sentences, which have no immediate connection with the problem.

The river flows farther to the west-by-north for 40 li, then to the north-east, to be met by the water of Lake Kung-sheng (= Gun-chu-tso), which sinks under the ground of the lake basin, but which, after reappearing, and after receiving three northern affluents, runs south-westwards to the river.

The lake of Kung-sheng-o-mo has two sources—one coming from the north-east, from Ta-ko-la-kung-ma-shan, and flowing 150–160 li; the other from the east, from the western foot of Ma-erh-yo-mu-ling (= Marium-la) in the western frontiers of Choshu-tê. This last-mentioned mountain forms the eastern boundary of A-li, and is the chief range going south-eastwards from Kang-ti-ssu. The water (of the lake Kung-sheng) flows westwards for more than 50 li, and forms another lake, 80 li wide, and without an outlet. However, more than 10 li farther to the west there is a third lake with a subterranean source and with a length of 30 li. A stream comes from the north to the lake. The river now flows south-westwards for 60 li, and receives a stream coming from the north-east. 40 li farther south-westwards it receives a stream coming from the northern mountains; farther south-westwards the river meets the water from Lang-chuan-ka-pa-pu-shan.

The water forms the lake Ma-piu-mu-ta-lai (= Tso-mavang). From south to north it is 150 li long, from east to west 80 or 100 li wide, and has a circumference of more than 200 li. On the northern side of the lake there are two streams coming from the north. The lake is situated 120 li to the south of Kang-ti-ssu. The water flows out from the west of the lake into the lake Lang-ka (= Langak-tso) at a distance of 60 li. The latter lake receives a stream coming from the north-east. Lake Lang-ka has a narrow rectangular shape, pointed and elongated, the length from south to north being 170 li, and the width from east to west 100 li. Its northern pointed corner has the stream coming from north-east. There are three sources on the southern foot at a distance of 70 li from a southern branch of Kang-ti-ssu; they flow southwards, unite into one stream, which takes a south-westerly course for 150–160 li before entering the lake. The lake is the same in circumference and area, but different in outline.

The water (of lake Lang-ka) flows out from the west, and after running westwards for more than 100 li it turns to the south-west, and is now called the Lang-chu-ho, and takes a sinuous course for more than 200 li. Then it receives the Chu-ka-la-ho coming from the north-east.

This description of the position of the source of the Sutlej is of such extraordinary interest that I do not like to reserve it for my scientific work, and the less so that it supports the theory I expressed when in India, that the Tage-tsangpo is nothing but the uppermost section of the course of the Sutlej, or, in other words, that the source of the Tage-tsangpo is also that of the Sutlej. Many quotations have been looked up during the discussion that has arisen on this problem, but they cannot compare in importance with the one just cited, which, moreover, is sixty years older than the oldest of the others, namely, Gerard's opinion that the Gunchu-tso is the source of the Sutlej.

The description in Chi Chao Nan's *Hydrography* is distinguished by the same careful conformity with the truth and conscientiousness as all other Chinese geographical descriptions. Compare the description of Kailas (Kang-rinpoche) with what I have already said about it.

Lang-chuan-ka-pa-pu is the Chinese translation of the Tibetan Lanchen-kabab, which literary means the "Source of the Sutlej." When the Chinese author informs us that east of Langchen-kabab lies Tamchok-kabab, which is the source of the river Yere-tsangpo (Brahmaputra), we must admit that his description is quite in accordance with the truth, as I, the first European to visit this country, have myself discovered; for on the Tamlung-la I stood on the pass which parts the water between the Brahmaputra and Sutlej, and immediately to the south of the pass I saw Gang-lung-gangri and the glacier from which the Tage-tsangpo takes its rise, and in which the source of the Sutlej lies.

It is further said that the lake Gunchu-tso has two source streams—one from the north-east, from the mountain Ta-ko-la-kung-ma, which is evidently identical with D'Anville's Tacra-concla; the other from the west side of the pass Marium-la: an account which agrees with Ryder's map in all particulars. At present the Gunchu-tso is completely cut off and is salt; it therefore is no longer connected with the Sutlej system. But 147 years ago it had an outlet which ran partly underground,

and then, rising up again, joined the Langchen-kamba or Tage-tsangpo. And that the Tage-tsangpo was at one time considered by the Tibetans to be the headwater of the Sutlej is apparent from the fact that its name, Langchen-kamba, is still applied to the upper of the two sacred source streams in the valley of the Tage-tsangpo.

And, again, it is said: This water, that is, the water of the Langchen-kabab, or the headwater of the Sutlej, forms the lake Ma-piu-mu-ta-lai, the Tso-mavang or Tso-mavam, as the name is also pronounced; on D'Anville's map it is written Ma-pama Talai, and D'Anville explains that Talai signifies lake. He might have added that it is the same word as in Dalai Lama, the priest, whose wisdom is as unfathomable as the ocean; for the Chinese word Talai or Dalai means ocean. By the use of this word the Chinese author wished to imply that Tso-mavang is much larger than the other lakes mentioned in his text.

The surplus water, as there is every reason to assume, flowed in the year 1762 from Tso-mavang through the channel to Langak-tso. The length of the channel was 60 li, which corresponds to my 5½ miles. All the northern tributaries which flow into the two lakes from the valleys of the Trans-Himalaya are correctly noted. The lake Langak is called Lang-ka. On D'Anville's map, the material for which was supplied by the Jesuits who lived in Pekin in the time of the Emperor Kang Hi (at the beginning of the eighteenth century), the lake is named Lanken. On the same map the river flowing thence westwards is called Lanc-tchou (Sutlej), but it is suggested, absurdly enough, that it is the upper course of the Ganges. D'Anville names the mountains south of Tso-mavang Lantchia-Kepou, which is Langchen-kabab, and the mountains lying to the south-east of them Tam-tchou, that is, Tamchok, in which he quite correctly places the origin of the Yarou Tsanpou, the Brahmaputra. The material for the map of the whole Chinese Empire, which the Jesuits presented to the Emperor Kang Hi in the year 1718, was collected between the years 1708 and 1716, and the Emperor procured informa-

tion about Tibet through natives, who were prepared for their work by the Jesuits, just as in later times English topographers have trained Indian pundits.

From D'Anville's map we learn that 200 years ago the Sutlej flowed out of Langak-tso through the bed I have already described. Professor Ogawa's translation of the Chinese text shows us that even in the year 1762, or perhaps some years before, the river still emerged from the Langak-tso. And it is expressly said that the river Chu-ka-la-ho (Chu-kar, which, however, is said to descend from the north-east instead of the south-east) is only a tributary.

In the year 1846 Henry Strachey found no visible outlet, but he says that there is one underground, and considers it probable that the channel also may carry water when the lake has risen after heavy rains.

On July 30, 1908, I heard from the chief lama of the monastery Dölchu-gompa, who was born in the neighbourhood and was then fifty-five years old, that when he was quite young, water occasionally flowed out of the lake. But when he was ten years old, that would be in the year 1863, this water had failed, and since then no more had been seen. On the other hand, the springs in the bed are constant both in winter and in summer, and are independent of the precipitation. The monks believe that the water comes from Langak-tso, but nevertheless they call it the Langchen-kabab, the river which flows out of the mouth of the elephant.

My investigations on the spot, as well as the Chinese quotation, prove that Colonel S. G. Burrard is quite right in his masterly description of the rivers of the Himalayas and Tibet (Calcutta, 1907), when he includes Tso-mavang and Langak-tso and all their affluents in the drainage basin of the Sutlej, and therefore I will here cite two sentences of Colonel Burrard:

> The connection between the two lakes may be taken as established, but that between the western lake and the Sutlej basin is still open to question. If the water from Rakas-tal flows into the Sutlej once a century, and then only for such a

short period as to be observed by no one, we shall still be justified in including the lakes in the catchment area of the river.

And in this connection I would point out that the water-level of Tibetan rivers and lakes is subject to periodical fluctuations, dependent on the precipitation, of the same kind as the Brückner periods. The level in the two lakes varies from year to year. At the present time they are very low, but there is nothing to prevent them rising gradually in a more or less distant future. Tso-mavang may rise so that its water may again flow through the channel to Langak-tso, and this lake at length may discharge its surplus water, as formerly, through the dry bed of the Sutlej. It is more probable, however, that Langak-tso is approaching a time when it will lose its subterranean outlet also, and be quite isolated, like Gunchu-tso and Panggong-tso, and consequently become salt in time. But after it has lost its outlet it may be a long time, as Professor Brückner informs me, before the lake becomes noticeably salt. The next step in the development will be that Tso-mavang will be cut off from Langak-tso and likewise become salt.

However, we need not plunge into speculations and prognostications of the future, which may have surprises in store about which we can form only more or less probable conjectures. It is our duty to rely solely on fact and observation.

And now that we are agreed that the two lakes belong to the drainage area of the Sutlej, the question is: Which of the rivers debouching into Tso-mavang is the headwater of the Sutlej? Naturally, the longest and the one which carries most water. The river which once flowed out of Gunchu-tso has no claim to this honour, and the Gunchu-tso must be rejected as the source of the Sutlej. The Tage-tsangpo discharged 388 cubic feet of water per second, while all the other streams entering Tso-mavang carried at most 100 cubic feet each. The source of the Tage-tsangpo in the front of the Ganglung glacier is therefore the source of the Sutlej.

CHAPTER LI

A PILGRIMAGE ROUND KANG-RINPOCHE

WE are again on the Khaleb moor and the day is September 3, on which we are to begin the circuit of the holy mountain. The head Gova of Parka is with us to hold me in check, but I take very good care not to betray my plans. Tsering, Rabsang, Namgyal, and Ishe are to go with me; they are Lamaists, and are glad of the opportunity to come nearer the gates of salvation by wandering round the holy mountain. We take provisions for three days, the absolutely necessary instruments, sketch- and note-books. The stand of the large camera and one of the boat's tarpaulins are to serve as a tent. The whole baggage is only a light load for a horse. I ride my small grey Ladaki and the four men march on foot, for no one may ride round the holy mountain unless he is a heathen, like myself. The rest of the caravan is to wait for us in Khaleb, and my tent is to be left untouched that the Tibetans may think that I am expected back in the evening.

Tsering, Namgyal, and Ishe start early, and Rabsang and I a little later. The Gova and his men come to ask what it all means and whither I am going, but I answer only, "I shall soon be back again," and ride off to the north, 30° E., to the mouth of the Dunglung valley.

The others wait for us among the first moraines, and then we proceed in close column up and down among old moraines which have been thrust down by vanished glaciers. A party of pilgrims from Kham in the distant east are resting on the bank of the Dunglung river. They have pitched their tents,

and their horses are grazing on the fresh grass. From the top of the moraine is seen the northern part of our stormy Langak-tso.

We ride up the valley and soon have on both sides solid rock of hard green and violet conglomerate, with huge cones of detritus at the foot of the slopes. Enormous boulders of conglomerate have fallen down here. On the left bank of the river, where the road comes up from Tarchen, stand a small cubical house and several *manis* and *chhortens* in long rows: it is a sacred road, the road of pilgrims round Kang-rinpoche.

The cliffs assume ever wilder forms, falling perpendicularly to terraces and pebble screes, forming steps and ledges, fortifications, battlements and towers, as though built by human hands. They consist of sandstone and conglomerate, and the strata dip 10° to the south, and to the eye appear horizontal. A small bridge spans the river. A party of pilgrims behind us is just crossing it. But we are on the right bank, and above us Nyandi-gompa is perched on its terrace. Above it rises the vertical wall of a huge mountain mass, a dangerous background for the monastery. Up on a ledge dwells a hermit, and quite at the top stands a streamer pole named Nyandi-kong. Five years ago a huge block fell down upon the monastery and laid half of it in ruins. The block still lies in the inner court. It was early in the morning after long-continuous rain; no one was hurt, but the monastery had to be rebuilt.

Two monks, two old women, and a boy received us kindly, and said it was the first time they had seen a European in Nyandi. The monastery, as well as the three others on Kailas, is under Tarchen-labrang, which is situated on the southern foot of the mountain, where the pilgrims begin and end their circuit. Curiously enough, these monasteries belong to Tongsa Penlop, the Raja of Bhotan. The preceding year, 1906, was a year of the fire horse, and the year 1918 will be a year of the earth horse; every twelfth year is a horse year, in which wood, fire, earth, iron or water is prefixed to the name horse; the Tibetan cycle (the period of time which is the base

of the reckoning) extends over sixty years with the names of twelve different animals. Every horse year, and accordingly every twelfth year, crowds of pilgrims come to Kailas. The monks said that they cannot be counted, but they knew that in the year 1907 more than 5000 pilgrims had been at Nyandi, of whom the greater part came from Ladak.

The *lhakang*, or hall of the gods, is very original. Four pillars support the roof. The altar, like a Chinese kiosque of wood painted in colours, stands alone and in deep shadow, but so many votive lights are placed in front that they seem like a festival illumination. An especial lamp hangs before the image of Sakya-muni, which stands against a wall. In front of the altar is a huge copper vessel with a cover, which is called Tosungjön. It is said to have flown in old times from India through the air. In winter it is filled with butter, in summer with *chang*. A lama with a brass ladle poured the consecrated beverage into the bowls of my men, and out of the silver bowls with peacocks' feathers he poured holy water into the hollow of their hands; they drank of it and besmeared their faces with the rest. All, except Rabsang, paid due reverence to the statues and prayed, and Tsering had murmured his prayers all the way along and let the beads of his rosary slip through his fingers. Two fine elephant's tusks (*langchen-sala-rapten*) were set up before the altar.

In the Tsenkang hall is a figure of Hlabsen clothed in gold brocade and *kadakhs*, the god of Kang-rinpoche and Tso-mavang. In the ante-chamber is a whole arsenal of guns and swords and wooden and leathern shields, each with four iron bosses. On the outside of the monastery, which fronts the holy mountain, rows of artistically sculptured slabs are affixed. On six of them each of the holy characters is incised, and each of the gigantic characters is again filled in with the invariable alpha and omega of Lamaism, "Om mani padme hum." On other flagstones gods are carved with wonderful dexterity, and one feels a vain desire to buy one or two of them.

The view from the roof is indescribably beautiful. The

icy summit of Kang-rinpoche rises amid fantastic fissured precipitous rocks, and in the foreground are the picturesque superstructure of the monastery and its streamers.

But time flies. After spending three hours in Nyandi, we say farewell to the monks, descend the steep path zigzagging among rubbish and boulders, and continue our journey to the north-north-east along the right bank of the river. At every turn I could stand still in astonishment, for this valley is one of the grandest and most beautiful in its wildness that I have ever seen. The precipice on the right side of the valley is divided into two stages with a terrace between them, and in the midst gapes a dark ravine. On the left side the rock forms a single vertical wall, and here the eyes fall on a succession of singular forms of relief, rocks like congealed cascades, citadels, church towers, and embattled fortifications, separated by cañon-like hollows. Water from melting snow-fields pours down the steep slopes. One such jet of water is quite 800 feet high and white as milk; the wind turns it into spray, but it collects again, only to be split up against a projection. The rock around it is wet and dark with spurted drops. A natural rock bridge crosses a small cleft with vertical walls.

Immediately beyond the monastery the summit of Kailas is lost to view, but soon a bit of it is seen again through a gap. We passed twelve pilgrims, and soon after a second party resting on a slope. They put on solemn faces and do not talk with one another, but murmur prayers, walking with their bodies bent, and leaning on a staff—frequently, too, without a staff. How they have longed to come here! And now they are here and walk round the mountain, which is always on their right. They feel no weariness, for they know that every step improves their prospects in the world beyond the river of death. And when they have returned to their black tents in distant valleys, they tell their friends of all the wonders they have seen, and of the clouds, which sail like the dragon ships of old below the white summit of Gangri.

Small conical cairns are everywhere. Tsering never omits

to take up a stone from the margin of the road and lay it as his contribution on every such votive pile, and thereby he does a good deed, for he makes the way less rough for those who come after him. The sun looks out through a gap, and throws a bright yellow light into the valley, which otherwise is in shadow. The icy peak again appears much foreshortened. Several tributaries come in from the sides, and towards evening the river rises, containing quite 280 cubic feet of water.

A man from Gertse has been going round the mountain for twenty successive days, and now has just accomplished his tenth circuit. Dunglung-do is a very important valley junction, where three valleys converge—the Chamo-lungchen from the north, 70° W., the Dunglung from the north, 5° W., and the third, called in its upper course Hle-lungpa, which we ascend. We now have granite on both sides. Kailas turns a sharp edge to the north, and from here the peak resembles a tetrahedron more than ever. Again the mountain is concealed by an elevation of the ring which girdles it as Monte Somma encircles Vesuvius. The main river swells up towards evening; the other two are spanned by bridges. Numbers of boulders lie all about. All is granite, and therefore the mountain forms are rounder and more lumpy.

At length we see the monastery Diri-pu in front of us, standing on the slope on the right side of the valley. A huge block of granite beside the path up to it bears the usual sacred characters, and there also are long *manis*, streamers, and cairns. All the pilgrims we have overtaken in the course of the day turn into the monastery, where they can pass the night free of charge. The convent is crammed full after the arrival of a party of pilgrims belonging to the Pembo sect. These, of course, wander round the mountain in the reverse direction, and the orthodox cast contemptuous glances at them when they meet. I prefer to pitch my tent on the roof, where the luggage of the pilgrims is piled up. Here also there is a fine view of Kailas, raising its summit due south. With a temperature of 40° at nine o'clock it is cold and disagreeable, for a strong wind blows, and my tent, consisting only of

the camera-stand covered with a linen cloth, is too small to allow of a fire being lighted.

Since I had been successful in fixing the positions of the sources of the Brahmaputra and Sutlej, my old dream of discovering the source of the Indus was revived, and all my aspirations and ambition were now concentrated on this object. When I now learned from the monks that the point where the famous river issues forth from the "Mouth of the Lion" was only three days' journey to the north-east beyond a lofty pass, everything else seemed of trifling consequence compared to an advance into the unknown country in the north. We held a council of war; we had provisions only for two days more, and we had not brought enough money with us, and, moreover, the state of affairs in Khaleb was too uncertain to allow of greater hazards. I therefore decided to carry out my original plan in the meantime and complete the pilgrimage, and afterwards make the source of the Indus the object of a fresh excursion from Khaleb, or, if the worst came to the worst, from Gartok.

On September 4 we take leave of the monks of Diri-pu, cross by a bridge the river which comes down from the pass Tseti-lachen-la in the Trans-Himalaya, from the other side of which the water flows to the Indus, and mount in an easterly direction over rough steep slopes thickly bestrewn with granite boulders. On our right is the river which is fed by the glaciers of Kailas; it is quite short, but is very full of water. The path becomes still steeper, winding among immense blocks of granite, and leads up to the first hump, after which the ground is a little more even to the next break. Here we have a splendid view of the short truncated glacier which, fed from a sharply defined trough-shaped firn basin, lies on the north side of Kailas. Its terminal, lateral, and medial moraines are small but distinct. Eastwards from Kailas runs off an exceedingly sharp, pointed, and jagged ridge, covered on the north side with snow, and belts of pebbles in the snow give all this side a furrowed appearance. From all corners of the ice mantle and the snowfields foaming brooks hurry down to the river. On our left, northwards, the

mountains consist of vertical fissured granite in wild pyramidal forms. Kailas is protected on the north by immense masses of granite, but the mountain itself is in all probability of conglomerate, as shown by the nearly horizontal bedding plainly perceptible in the projecting ledges, sharply marked snow-lines and belts of ice. The summit rises above this sea of wild mountains like a mighty crystal of hexagonal form.

A party of poor women and children climbed wearily up to the pass. An elderly man, who was now making his ninth circuit, made no objection to join our party; he knew the country and could give information about it. On another rise in the ground, called Tutu-dapso, we saw hundreds of votive cairns, 3 feet high—quite a forest of stone pyramids—like innumerable gravestones in a churchyard.

Slowly and laboriously we climbed up this arduous pass, one of the most troublesome on the whole journey. Thicker and thicker lay the boulders, exclusively of granite in all possible varieties, some pink and some so light a grey as to be almost white. Between two boulders lay a suspicious-looking bundle of clothes. We examined it, and found that it contained the body of a man who had collapsed in making the tour of the mountain of the gods. His features were rigid, and he seemed poor and emaciated. No one knew who he was, and if he had any relations they would never learn that his pilgrimage had launched him into new adventures among the dark mazes of the soul's migrations.

Our old man stops at a flat granite block of colossal dimensions, and says that this is a *dikpa-karnak*, or a test-stone for sinners. A narrow tunnel runs under the block, and whoever is without sin, or at any rate has a clear conscience, can creep through the passage, but the man who sticks fast in the middle is a scoundrel. I asked the old man whether it might not happen that a thin rogue would wriggle through while a fat, honest fellow might stick fast; but he answered very seriously that stoutness had nothing to do with the result of the trial, which depended only on the state of the soul. Evidently our honest Ishe was not certain which way the

balance of his conscience inclined, for, before we were aware, we saw him disappearing under the block, and heard him puffing, panting, and groaning, scratching with his hands and trying to get a foothold behind. But when he had floundered about inside long and vigorously, he was at last obliged to call for help in a half-strangled voice. We laughed till we could hardly keep on our feet, and let him stay a while in his hole because of his manifest sinfulness. Then the two other men dragged him out by the legs, and he looked extremely confused (and dusty) when he at length emerged again into the outer world, an unmasked villain. The old man told us that a woman had become so firmly fixed that she had actually to be dug out.

Some 200 paces farther in this maze of granite boulders, among which we wandered as in lanes between low houses and walls, stands a test-stone of another kind. It consists of three blocks leaning on one another, with two hollows between them. The task is to creep through the left passage and return by the right, that is, in the orthodox direction. Here Ishe made up for his previous discomfiture by crawling through both holes. I told him frankly that there was no skill required here, for the holes were so large that even small yaks could go through. However, the sinner had in this second stone an opportunity of preserving at least a show of righteousness.

Our wanderings round Kang-rinpoche, the "holy ice mountain" or the "ice jewel," is one of my most memorable recollections of Tibet, and I quite understand how the Tibetans can regard as a divine sanctuary this wonderful mountain which has so striking a resemblance to a *chhorten*, the monument which is erected in memory of a deceased saint within or without the temples. How often during our roamings had I heard of this mountain of salvation! And now I myself walked in pilgrim garb along the path between the monasteries, which are set, like precious stones in a bangle, in the track of pilgrims round Kang-rinpoche, the finger which points up to the mighty gods throned like stars in unfathomable space.

From the highlands of Kham in the remotest east, from

Naktsang and Amdo, from the unknown Bongba, which we have heard of only in vague reports, from the black tents which stand like the spots of a leopard scattered among the dreary valleys of Tibet, from Ladak in the mountains of the far west, and from the Himalayan lands in the south, thousands of pilgrims come hither annually, to pace slowly and in deep meditation the 28 miles round the navel of the earth, the mountain of salvation. I saw the silent procession, the faithful bands, among which all ages and both sexes are represented, youths and maidens, strong men with wife and child, grey old men who would before their death follow in the footsteps of countless pilgrims to win a happier existence, ragged fellows who lived like parasites on the charity of the other pilgrims, scoundrels who had to do penance for a crime, robbers who had plundered peaceful travellers, chiefs, officials, herdsmen, and nomads, a varied train of shady humanity on the thorny road, which after interminable ages ends in the deep peace of Nirvana. August and serene Siva looks down from her paradise, and Hlabsen from his jewelled palace, on the innumerable human beings below who circle, like asteroids round the sun, in ever fresh troops, round the foot of the mountain, going up through the western valley, crossing the Dolma pass, and descending the eastern valley.

We soon discover that most of these simple pilgrims have no clear idea of the benefits their journey is supposed to confer on them. When they are questioned, they usually answer that after death they will be allowed to sit near the god of Gangri. But what they all believe most firmly and obstinately is that the pilgrimage will bring them a blessing in this world. It will ward off all evil from their tents and huts, will keep away sickness from their children and herds, protect them from robbers, thieves, and losses, will send them rain, good pasturage, and increase among their yaks and sheep, will act like a talisman, and guard themselves and their property as the four spirit kings protect the images of the temple halls from demons. They march with light elastic step, they feel neither the icy-cold cutting wind nor the scorching sun; every

step is a link in a chain which cannot be broken by the powers of evil which persecute and torment the children of men. They start on their way from Tarchen-labrang, and every new turn in the road brings them a step nearer to the point where the ring closes. And during the whole peregrination they pray "Om mani padme hum," and every time this prayer is uttered they let a bead of the rosary pass through the fingers. The stranger also approaches Kang-rinpoche with a feeling of awe. It is incomparably the most famous mountain in the world. Mount Everest and Mont Blanc cannot vie with it. Yet there are millions of Europeans who have never heard of Kang-rinpoche, while the Hindus and Lamaists all know Kailas, though they have no notion where Mont Blanc lifts up its head. Therefore one approaches the mountain with the same feeling of respect as one experiences in Lhasa, Tashi-lunpo, Buddh Gaya, Benares, Mecca, Jerusalem, and Rome—those holy places which have attracted to their altars countless bands of sin-burdened souls and seekers after truth.

Our volunteer guide said that he was on his ninth circuit of the mountain. He took two days to each, and intended to go round thirteen times. He called the track Kang-kora, the Gangri circle. Many years before, he had performed the meritorious feat called *gyangchag-tsallgen*, which consists in measuring the length of the way by the length of the pilgrim's body. One such pilgrimage is worth thirteen ordinary circuits on foot. My pilgrimage was of no value at all, because I was riding, the old man said; I must go on foot if I wished to derive any benefit from it.

When we came a second time to Diri-pu some days later, we saw two young lamas engaged in the prostration pilgrimage round the mountain. They were from Kham, and from that part of the country "where the last men dwell," and had been a year on the way to Kailas. They were poor and ragged, and had nothing to carry, for they lived on the alms of the faithful. They had come in nine days from Tarchen to Diri-pu, and reckoned that they had still eleven days to finish their round. I accompanied them for half an hour on foot to observe their

procedure. This consisted of six movements. Suppose the young lama standing on the path with his forehead held slightly down and his arms hanging loosely at his sides. (1) He places the palms of his hands together and raises them to the top of his head, at the same time bending his head a little down; (2) he lays his hands under his chin, lifting up his head again; (3) he kneels upon the ground, bends forwards and lays himself full length on the ground with outstretched arms; (4) he passes his hands laid together over his head; (5) he stretches his right hand forwards as far as it will reach, and scratches a mark in the soil with a piece of bone, which shows the line which must be touched by his toes at the next advance; and (6) he raises himself up with his hands, makes two or three strides up to the mark, and repeats the same actions. And thus he goes round the whole mountain.

It is slow work and they do not hurry; they perform the whole business with composure, but they lose their breath, especially on the way up to the pass. And on the way down from the Dolma-la there are places so steep that it must be a gymnastic feat to lie down head foremost. One of the young monks had already accomplished one round, and was now on the second. When he had finished, in twelve days, he intended to betake himself to a monastery on the Tsangpo and be there immured for the rest of his life. And he was only twenty years old! We, who in our superior wisdom smile at these exhibitions of fanaticism and self-mortification, ought to compare our own faith and convictions with theirs. The life beyond the grave is hidden from all peoples, but religious conceptions have clothed it in different forms among different peoples. "If thou lookest closely, thou wilt see that hope, the child of heaven, points every mortal with trembling hand to the obscure heights." Whatever may be our own convictions, we must admire those who, however erroneous their views may be in our opinion, yet possess faith enough to remove mountains.

'OM MANI PADME HUM'

CHAPTER LII

'OM MANI PADME HUM'

Now begins the last very steep zigzag in the troublesome path among sharp or round grey boulders of every form and size, a cone of blocks with steps in it. Dung-chapje is the name of a round wall of stone, in the midst of which is a smaller boulder, containing in a hollow depression a round stone like the cleft hoof of a wild yak. When the faithful pilgrim passes this spot, he takes this stone, strikes it against the bottom of the hollow and turns it once round like a pestle. Consequently the hollow is being constantly deepened, and one day it will be lowered right through the block.

We mount up a ridge with brooks flowing on both sides. On every rock, which has a top at all level, small stones are piled up, and many of these pyramidal heaps are packed so closely that there is no room for another stone. Thanks to these cairns the pilgrim can find his way in snowstorm and fog, though without them he could not easily find it in sunshine.

At length we see before us a gigantic boulder, its cubical contents amounting perhaps to 7000 or 10,000 cubic feet; it stands like an enormous milestone on the saddle of Dolma-la, which attains the tremendous height of 18,599 feet. On the top of the block smaller stones are piled up into a pyramid supporting a pole, and from its end cords decorated with rags and streamers are stretched to other poles fixed in the ground

Horns and bones, chiefly shoulder-blades of sheep, are here deposited in large quantities—gifts of homage to the pass, which is supposed to mark the halfway point of the pilgrimage. When the pilgrim arrives here, he smears a bit of butter on the side of the stone, plucks out a lock of his own hair and plasters it into the butter. Thus he has offered up some of himself and some of his belongings. Consequently the stone resembles a huge wig-block, from which black locks of hair flutter in the wind. In time it would be completely covered with Tibetan hair, were it not that the locks occasionally fall off and are blown away by the wind. Teeth are stuck in all the chinks of the Dolma block, forming whole rosaries of human teeth. If you have a loose tooth, dedicate it to the spirits of the pass. Tsering unfortunately was toothless, or he would gladly have conformed to this regulation.

Heaps of rags lie all around, for the pilgrim has always a spare shred to hang on a string or lay at the foot of the block. But he not only gives, he also takes. Our old man took a rag from the heap and had a large quantity of such relics round his neck, for he had taken one from every cairn.

The view is grand, though Kailas itself is not visible. But one can see the sharp black ridge lying quite close on the south side with a mantle of snow and a hanging glacier, its blue margin cut off perpendicularly at the small moraine lake on the eastern side of the pass.

While I sat at the foot of the block, making observations and drawing the panorama, a lama came strolling up leaning on his stick. He carried a book, a drum, a *dorche*, and a bell, and likewise a sickly-looking child in a basket on his back. The parents, nomads in the valley below, had given him *tsamba* for two days to carry the child round the mountain, whereby it would recover its health. Many pilgrims gain their livelihood by such services, and some make the pilgrimage only for the benefit of others. The lama with the child complained that he had only made the circuit of the mountain three times, and did not possess money enough to go round thirteen times. I gave him alms.

Then he sat down on the pass, turned his face in the direction where the summit of Kang-rinpoche was hidden, placed his hands together, and chanted an interminable succession of prayers. After this he went up to the block and laid his forehead on the ground—how many times I do not know, but he was still at it when we descended among boulders to the tiny round lake Tso-kavála. We followed its northern shore, and our old friend told me that the ice never breaks up.

But time slips away and we must hasten on. We walk, slide, and scramble down steep slopes where it would be easy to tumble down head over heels. The old man is sure-footed, and these slopes are old acquaintances. But woe betide him if he turned round and went in the reverse direction. At length we reach the main valley, called in its upper part Tselung, and in its lower Lam-chyker. Through the large valley, which enters the main valley on the right side, and is called Kando-sanglam, we now look eastwards upon the highest pinnacle of the summit of Kailas, which has a sharp edge towards the north-east, and still looks like a crystal. At two *manis* erected side by side we pass the border of the granite and the conglomerate, which now appears again. The further we proceed the more numerous are the boulders of this kind of rock, while those of granite at length occur no more. We march south-west and bivouac on the roof of the monastery Tsumtul-pu. All day long, at all the cairns and all the resting-places, I have heard nothing but an endless murmur of the words "Om mani padme hum," and now, as long as I am awake, "Om mani padme hum" sounds in my ears from all nooks and corners.

The temple had no other curiosity but a statue of Duk Ngavang Gyamtso, 5 feet high, sitting as at a writing-desk, two not very large elephant's tusks, and a five-branched chandelier from Lhasa. Our visit, therefore, did not last long, and we rode down the valley in which the river gradually increased in size. Here, too, *manis* and *chhortens* are erected, and at the end of the valley, where again numbers of granite boulders are accumulated, we see once more Langak-tso and the grand Gurla group.

At Tarchen-labrang we reached the termination of the pilgrimage. Here twenty-three tents were pitched, and we received the greatest attention, were refreshed with milk and *chang*, and rested two hours. Then we left the pilgrim road to the right, and came into sight of the fourth monastery, perched high up on a terrace in the valley below the holy peak. A curious local wind at the north-west corner of Langak-tso raised up clouds of dust like the smoke of a burning town. A short while after, we lay peacefully among our men in the camp on the Khaleb moor.

By this pilgrimage round the holy mountain, which I had been able to accomplish by an unexpected lucky chance, I had gained an insight into the religious life of the Tibetans. It had also been, as it were, a revisal of all the experiences I had already collected in this connection.

Our knowledge of Tibet is still defective, and some future traveller will find sufficient material to show on a map of the whole Lamaistic world all the great pilgrim routes to innumerable sanctuaries. On such a map numerous roads would converge, like the spokes of a wheel, to Da Kuren, the temple of Maidari in Urga. Still closer would the rays from every inhabited spot of the immense territory of Lamaism run together to their chief focus, Lhasa. Somewhat less thickly they would unite at Tashi-lunpo. Innumerable winding roads and paths would start from the farthest border countries of Tibet, all tending towards the holy Kailas. We know that they exist, and no great imagination is required to conceive how they would look on a map. But it is with the routes of pilgrims just as with the flight of the wild-geese: we know nothing of their precise course. Besides, among the principal foci are scattered a number of smaller centres whence radii diverge to a sanctuary, a lake, or a spring, and from the heart of all these wind-roses peals out a cry to the faithful, similar to the exhortation of Isaiah: "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem" (Isa. xxxiii. 20).

In the ears of the Tibetan another saying rings, the mystical formula "Om mani padme hum," not only on his wanderings

to the goal of his pilgrimage, but throughout his life. Concerning this Waddell makes, among others, the following remarks: "Om-ma-ṇi pad-me Hūṃ, which literally means '*Om!* The Jewel in the lotus!' *Hūṃ!*—is addressed to the Bodhisat Padmapāṇi, who is represented like Buddha as seated or standing within a lotus-flower. He is the patron-god of Tibet and the controller of metempsychosis. And no wonder this formula is so popular and constantly repeated by both Lāmas and laity, for its mere utterance is believed to stop the cycle of re-births and to convey the reciter directly to paradise. Thus it is stated in the Māṇi-kah-bum with extravagant rhapsody that this formula 'is the essence of all happiness, prosperity, and knowledge, and the great means of deliverance,' for the *Om* closes re-birth amongst the gods, *ma* among the Titans, *ṇi* as a man, *pad* as a beast, *me* as a Tantalus, and *Hūṃ* as an inhabitant of hell. And in keeping with this view each of these six syllables is given the distinctive colour of these six states of re-birth, namely: *Om*, the godly *white*; *ma*, the Titanic *blue*; *ṇi*, the human *yellow*; *pad*, the animal *green*; *me*, the 'Tantalic' *red*; and *Hūṃ*, the hellish *black*" (*The Buddhism of Tibet*, 148-9).

Köppen and Grünwedel translate the four words: "O, Jewel in the lotus-flower, Amen."

Wherever one turns in Tibet, he sees the six sacred characters engraved or chiselled out, and hears them repeated everywhere. They are found in every temple in hundreds of thousands of copies, nay, in millions, for in the great prayer mills they are stamped in fine letters on thin paper. On the monastery roofs, on the roofs of private houses, and on the black tents, they are inscribed on the fluttering streamers. On all the roads we ride daily past wall-like stone cists covered with slabs, on which the formula "Om mani padme hum" is carved. Seldom does the most lonely path lead up to a pass where no cairn is erected to remind the wanderer of his dependence all his life long on the influence of good and bad spirits. And on the top of every such *lhato* or *lhadse* is fixed a pole or a stick with streamers, every one proclaiming in

black letters the eternal truth. At projecting rocks cubical *chhortens* or *lhatos* stand beside the road in red and white. On the sides of granite rocks polished smooth by wind and weather figures of Buddha are frequently cut, and below them, as well as on fallen boulders, can be read in gigantic characters "Om mani padme hum." On the piers between which chain bridges are stretched over the Tsangpo or other rivers, heaps of stones are piled up, and on all these innumerable votive cairns lie yak skulls and crania of wild sheep and antelopes. Into the horns and the bleached frontal bones of the yak the sacred formula is cut, and the incised characters are filled in with red or some other holy colour. We find them again in innumerable copies and in many forms, especially on the high-roads which lead to temples and pilgrims' resorts, as well as at all places where there is danger, as on mountain passes and river fords. And even the ferry-boats of hide are decorated with blessed streamers.

In every caravan one man at least, and usually several, has a prayer-mill in his hand. This is rotated by means of a weight round the axle of the handle, and is stuffed full of paper strips bearing the holy formula in many thousands of impressions. All day long, whatever the duration of the journey, the believer turns his prayer-mill and babbles in chanting tones "Om mani padme hum." The militia who are called out to catch a robber band have on their ride more confidence in their prayer-mills than in their guns and sabres, and, sad to say, there are some even among the robbers who rattle off their Om and Hum in order to make their escape. Among the escorts which accompanied me on various occasions there were always one or two horsemen armed with a *mani* machine. One always sees this convenient praying instrument in the hands of the people one meets. The herdsman murmurs the six syllables beside his herd, his wife when milking the sheep, the merchant as he goes to market, the hunter as he stalks the wild yak on untrodden paths, the nomad when he sets out to move his tent to another pasture, the artisan as he bends over his work. With these words the

Tibetan begins his day, and with them on his tongue he lies down to rest. The Om and Hum are not only the Alpha and Omega of the day, but of his whole life.

The mystic words rang constantly in my ears. I heard them when the sun rose and when I blew out my light, and I did not escape them even in the wilderness, for my own men murmured "Om mani padme hum." They belong to Tibet, these words; they are inseparable from it: I cannot imagine the snow-capped mountains and the blue lakes without them. They are as closely connected with this country as buzzing with the bee-hive, as the flutter of streamers with the pass, as the ceaseless west wind with its howling.

The life of the Tibetan from the cradle to the grave is interwoven with a multitude of religious precepts and customs. It is his duty to contribute his mite to the maintenance of the monasteries and to the Peter's pence of the temples. When he passes a votive cairn he adds a stone to the pile as an offering; when he rides by a *mani*, he never forgets to guide his steed to the left of it; when he sees a holy mountain, he never omits to lay his forehead on the ground in homage; in all important undertakings he must, for the sake of his eternal salvation, seek the advice of monks learned in the law; when a mendicant lama comes to his door he never refuses to give him a handful of *tsamba* or a lump of butter; when he makes the round of the temple halls, he adds his contribution to the collection in the votive bowls; and when he saddles his horse or loads a yak, he again hums the everlasting "Om mani padme hum."

More frequently than an Ave Maria or a Paternoster in the Catholic world, "Om mani padme hum" forms an accompaniment to the life and wanderings of humanity over half Asia. The boundless vista opened out by the six holy syllables is thus expressed by Edwin Arnold in the concluding lines of his poem, *The Light of Asia*:

> The dew is on the lotus. Rise, Great Sun!
> And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.
> Om mani padme hum, the sunrise comes.
> The dewdrop slips into the shining sea.

CHAPTER LIII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOURCE OF THE INDUS

IMMEDIATELY on my arrival in Khaleb I told the old gova, who had the hopeless and thankless task of watching my proceedings, that I now intended to take the road past Singikabab, or the source of the Indus.

"If you go thither, Bombo," he answered, "I shall at once send a courier to the Garpuns, the two chiefs in Gartok."

"I do not think that the Garpuns will have any objection to my taking a more northerly route."

"Oh yes, the Garpuns received orders from Lhasa five days ago to watch carefully that you followed no other way but the great high-road to Gartok. The Garpuns straightway sent couriers to twelve different places — Parka, Misser, Purang, Singtod, and others—to make it known that you were not permitted to travel on byroads. If this letter had not reached me, I would willingly have let you march northwards, but now I dare not for my own sake."

"What would you do if I quietly disappeared one night? I can buy yaks in Tarchen, and then I shall not be dependent on those I have from you."

"Yes, of course. A man lives in Tarchen who has sixty yaks, and will sell them as soon as he sees silver money. But I shall at once send word to the Garpuns, and they will send men after you and force you to come back. To buy yaks would therefore be useless waste of money. However, if you like to let the main part of your caravan follow the high-road, and make yourself an excursion of a couple of days northwards

to the Singi-kabab, and then join your caravan again, I will put no obstacles in your way. But you do it at your own risk, and you will most certainly be caught before you reach the source of the Indus."

I was as much astonished as delighted by this sudden change in the attitude of the Gova, and arranged with Robert that he should lead the main caravan in very short day's marches to Gartok, while I made as rapidly as possible for the source of the Indus. I took only as many things as a small leathern trunk would contain, and as companions only five men, among them Rabsang as interpreter and Adul as cook, with our own six animals and three dogs, one of which, a new purchase, ran away on the first day. I had Robert's small tent, and our arsenal consisted of two guns and a revolver, for robbers were said to make the country very unsafe. I could not find a guide, but on the way to Diri-pu, where I encamped once more, I came across an old man from Tok-jalung, who wished to make the round of Kailas thirteen times, and gave me much valuable information. But no money could induce him to accompany us farther.

On the 8th we continued our way through the valley that runs north-north-eastwards from Diri-pu to the Tseti-la. The stream, divided into many arms, was covered in the night by a thin coating of ice, smooth as glass, where the water had run off, but it disappeared when day came. The valley is broad, and the road showed traces of considerable traffic, though we did not meet a soul. The marmots whistled in front of their holes; the summer would soon be over for them. Kang-rinpoche can be seen from many places, and here pilgrims from the north have piled up cairns. Granite predominates everywhere, but crystalline schists occur here and there. We followed the fresh tracks of three horsemen. The gradient became steeper and the scenery assumed more of an alpine character. We mounted up among huge cones of detritus with babbling brooks of melted snow to the pass, which lay at a height of 18,465 feet. Its plateau is singularly flat. On its northern side camp No. 234 was pitched.

In the evening Rabsang reported that our fuel-gatherers had heard whistles, and that these signals had been answered from the other side. The men believed that there were robbers here, and did not dare to sit outside by the fire lest they should be good marks for shots out of an ambush. I quieted them with the assurance that no robber would venture to attack a European, but gave orders to the watchmen to keep an eye on our animals.

The night passed quietly and the minimum temperature went down to 16.2°; autumn has come again into dreary Tibet. I had supposed that the Tseti-la was the pass on the main divide, but we had not gone far when we saw its brook, which flowed northwards, make a bend to the west, and descend through a well-defined valley to the Dunglung. It therefore belongs to the catchment basin of the Sutlej and not to the Indus, and the Tseti-la is a pass of secondary order. But we soon reached the actual pass, an extremely flat threshold. Here lies a small muddy lake drained by a brook issuing from its eastern side, which we followed all day. This pass is the Tseti-lachen-la, and it is a water-parting between the Sutlej and the Indus. Its height is less than that of the Tseti-la, for it is only 17,933 feet; it lies on the main chain of the Trans-Himalaya. Kailas, therefore, lies a good day's journey south of the water-shed of the two rivers, and belongs entirely to the basin of the Sutlej.

From the lake we follow the little affluent of the Indus northwards. The ground is marshy and rough. Here and there are seen three hearthstones. A dead horse lies among the luxuriant grass. It is singular that no nomads are encamped here. At length we see at a far distance quite down in the valley men going downstream with large flocks of sheep. Tundup Sonam and Ishe are sent after them, and by degrees the rest of us come up with the party. They are nomads from Gertse, who have taken salt to Gyanima and are now transporting barley on their 500 sheep. All the valley is dotted over with white sheep, which trip along actively, plucking the grass as they go. In front of us rises a steep purple

THE GOVA BY WHOSE HELP THE SOURCE OF THE INDUS WAS DISCOVERED (SEATED) AND TIBETANS AT KAILAS.

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mountain chain, and along the flank turned towards us the Indus is said to flow. We joined the men of the sheep caravan and camped together with them. There were five of them, all armed with guns, and they said that the district was frequently haunted by robbers, who at times seemed to vanish altogether, and then suddenly came down like a whirlwind, and no one knew whence they came.

Our camping-ground on the bank of the Indus (16,663 feet) is called Singi-buk. Eastwards the valley is broad and open, but the Indus itself is here an insignificant stream. I was therefore not astonished when I heard that it was only a short day's journey from the source, which, I was told, does not proceed from snow or a glacier, but springs up out of the ground. The men called the river the Singi-tsangpo, or Singi-kamba and the source itself Singi-kabab, though we afterwards heard the word pronounced Senge more frequently than Singi.

It turned out that one of the five men knew all about us. He was a brother of the Lobsang Tsering on the Dungtse-tso who had sold us three yaks the winter before (see Chapter XV.). It was a singular chance that we should fall in with him. He said he had heard how well we had treated his brother, and offered us his services—for a good reward, of course. As he had travelled several times through this region, quite unknown to Europeans, and was acquainted with all the passes, roads, and valleys, I thought he would be very valuable to me, and I proposed to give him 7 rupees a day, that is about half a month's pay of one of my Ladakis. Of course he accepted the terms at once and soon became our intimate friend.

But these business matters were not yet settled. The man had a quantity of sheep and barley. He consented to let us eight sheep on hire, and sell us their loads, which would last our horses for a week. He was to receive a rupee for the hire of each sheep, which was high, for a sheep is worth only 2 to 3 rupees. The old man would therefore receive 18 rupees every evening as long as he was with us; but it was cheap after all, for the discovery of the source of the Indus was involved.

The large sheep-caravan had already started on September 10, when we, with our new guide, whose own *tsamba* was carried on a ninth sheep, followed in its track. After an hour's march we crossed a tributary, the Lungdep-chu, which comes from a valley in the south-east, with flattish mountains in the background.

A little farther up the Singi-kamba expands into a basin containing an abundance of medium-sized fish. As we passed, the fish were darting upstream in compact shoals, and passed a very shallow place with slight swirls. Here Rabsang attacked them, but all his catch was only one small miserable fish. Then we threw up a dam by the bank, with an opening on one side, and the men went into the water and drove in the fish with shouts and splashing. Then the entrance was built up. After we had repeated this diversion three times, we had procured thirty-seven fine fish, and I was eager for my dinner, which I usually looked forward to with some loathing, for the hard dried mutton had become thoroughly distasteful to me. Our old man, who sat and watched us, thought that we had taken leave of our senses. Farther up, the fish were so crowded in a quiet pool that they made the water seem almost black with their dark backs.

We rode up the valley, leaving on our right a red, loaf-shaped mountain called Lungdep-ningri. Opposite, on the northern side of the valley, were seen two fine Ovis Ammon sheep feeding on a conical elevation. They bore splendid horns, and carried their heads royally. They soon perceived us, and made slowly up the slope. But they paid too much attention to our movements and did not notice that Tundup Sonam, with his gun on his back, was making a detour to stalk them from the other side of the hill. After a while we heard a shot, and a good hour later, when the camp was pitched, Tundup came back laden with as much of the flesh of his victim as he could carry. Thus we obtained a fresh addition to our somewhat scanty rations, and Tundup's exploit enhanced the glory of this memorable day. In the evening he went off again to fetch more meat, and he brought me the

head of the wild sheep, which I wished to preserve as a memento of the day at the source of the Indus.

The ground rises exceedingly slowly. Singi-yüra is a rugged cliff to the north, with a large hole through its summit. Singi-chava is the name of a commanding eminence to the south. Then we wade through the outflow of the Munjam valley running in from the south-east. Above this the Indus is only a tiny brook, and part of its water comes from a valley in the south-east, the Bokar. A little later we camp at the aperture of the spring, which is so well concealed that it might easily be overlooked without a guide.

From the mountains on the northern side a flattish cone of detritus, or, more correctly, a slope bestrewn with rubbish, descends to the level, open valley. At its foot projects a slab of white rock with an almost horizontal bedding, underneath which several small springs well up out of the ground, forming weedy ponds and the source stream, which we had traced upwards, and which is the first and uppermost of the head-waters of the mighty Indus. The four largest springs, where they issued from the ground, had temperatures of 48.6°, 49.1°, 49.6°, and 50.4° respectively. They are said to emit the same quantity of water in winter and summer, but a little more after rainy seasons. Up on the slab of rock stand three tall cairns and a small cubical *lhato* containing votive pyramids of clay. And below the *lhato* is a quadrangular *mani*, with hundreds of red flagstones, some covered with fine close inscriptions, some bearing a single character 20 inches high. On two the wheel of life was incised, and on another a divine image, which I carried off as a souvenir of the source of the Indus.

Our guide said that the source Singi-kabab was reverenced because of its divine origin. When travellers reached this place or any other part of the upper Indus, they scooped up water with their hands, drank of it, and sprinkled their faces and heads with it.

Through the investigations made by Montgomerie's pundits in the year 1867 it was known that the eastern arm of the Indus is the actual headwater, and I had afterwards an

opportunity of proving by measurement that the western, Gartok, stream is considerably smaller. But no pundit had succeeded in penetrating to the source, and the one who had advanced nearest to it, namely, to a point 30 miles from it, had been attacked by robbers and forced to turn back. Consequently, until our time the erroneous opinion prevailed that the Indus had its source on the north flank of Kailas, and, thanks to those admirable robbers, the discovery of the Indus source was reserved for me and my five Ladakis.

We passed a memorable evening and a memorable night at this important geographical spot, situated 16,946 feet above sea-level. Here I stood and saw the Indus emerge from the lap of the earth. Here I stood and saw this unpretentious brook wind down the valley, and I thought of all the changes it must undergo before it passes between rocky cliffs, singing its roaring song in ever more powerful crescendo, down to the sea at Karachi, where steamers load and unload their cargoes. I thought of its restless course through western Tibet, through Ladak and Baltistan, past Skardu, where the apricot trees nod on its banks, through Dardistan and Kohistan, past Peshawar, and across the plains of the western Panjab, until at last it is swallowed up by the salt waves of the ocean, the Nirvana and the refuge of all weary rivers. Here I stood and wondered whether the Macedonian Alexander, when he crossed the Indus 2200 years ago, had any notion where its source lay, and I revelled in the consciousness that, except the Tibetans themselves, no other human being but myself had penetrated to this spot. Great obstacles had been placed in my way, but Providence had secured for me the triumph of reaching the actual sources of the Brahmaputra and Indus, and ascertaining the origin of these two historical rivers, which, like the claws of a crab, grip the highest of all the mountain systems of the world—the Himalayas. Their waters are born in the reservoirs of the firmament, and they roll down their floods to the lowlands to yield life and sustenance to fifty millions of human beings. Up here white monasteries stand peacefully on their banks, while in India pagodas and mosques are

reflected in their waters; up here wolves, wild yaks, and wild sheep roam about their valleys, while down below in India the eyes of tigers and leopards shine like glowing coals of fire from the jungles that skirt their banks, and poisonous snakes wriggle through the dense brushwood. Here in dreary Tibet icy storms and cold snowfalls lash their waves, while down in the flat country mild breezes whisper in the crowns of the palms and mango trees. I seemed to listen here to the beating of the pulses of these two renowned rivers, to watch the industry and rivalry which, through untold generations, have occupied unnumbered human lives, short and transitory as the life of the midge and the grass; all those wanderers on the earth and guests in the abodes of time, who have been born beside the fleeting current of these rivers, have drunk of their waters, have drawn from them life and strength for their fields, have lived and died on their banks, and have risen from the sheltered freedom of their valleys up to the realms of eternal hope. Not without pride, but still with a feeling of humble thankfulness, I stood there, conscious that I was the first white man who had ever penetrated to the sources of the Indus and Brahmaputra.

CHAPTER LIV

A RESOLUTION

FROM the source of the Indus we travelled on north-eastwards with our friendly guide to a locality called Yumbamatsen, which lies in lat. 32° N. And thence I betook myself to Gartok, the chief town of western Tibet and the residence of the two Garpuns, where I arrived after many adventures on September 26, having crossed the Trans-Himalaya for the fifth time by the Jukti-la (19,111 feet high). I must, alas! omit a description of this journey for the present, though it passed for the most part through unknown country. Mr. Calvert crossed over the Jukti-la two years before.

In Gartok (14,656 feet) a new period began. This town is a turning-point in the chronicles of my journey. In the first place, I again came into contact with the outer world. Thakur Jai Chand, the British commercial agent, handed me immediately on my arrival a thick packet of letters, including a quantity from my dear home, and others from Lord and Lady Minto and their daughters, from Colonel Dunlop Smith, Younghusband, O'Connor, Rawling, and many other friends in Europe and Asia. Nothing, however, was heard of the heavy consignment I expected from Simla. But soon afterwards I heard from Dunlop Smith that all I had ordered was on the way and would arrive in due course, and meantime I had to wait in patience.

The Garpuns at once sent me presents as a token of welcome, with the usual polite phrases. They were of too

great importance to visit me first, so next day I went to them. The elder was ill; the younger, a gentleman from Lhasa, thirty-five years of age and of distinguished appearance, received me most cordially in his simple Government buildings, and was so little angry at the liberties I had recently taken that he did not even ask me where I had been. It was an irony of fate that a letter in most friendly terms and most liberal in its concessions, which I now received from Lien Darin by the hand of the Garpun, had not reached me until it was too late. When Lien Darin received my letter from Raga-tasam, he immediately sent off two Chinamen fully authorized to come to an agreement with me about the route I was to take. "For I shall be glad to know," said the Amban of Lhasa, "that you are travelling by the road that suits you." He was quite convinced that my movements, whichever way I took, would give no cause for political complications. And he concluded with the words: "Now, I hope that you will have a successful and peaceful journey, and I will pray for your health and prosperity."

How I regretted now that I had not stayed in Saka, and so much the more when the Garpun told me that the two Chinamen had arrived with an escort of four Tibetans only two weeks after we had left! But the Garpun was friendly disposed towards me; he was the most powerful man in western Tibet, and could still throw open all doors for me, if he dared and was willing to do so.

I was, indeed, pleased and thankful for the results which I had already been able to secure. Besides many other problems that had been solved, I had crossed the Trans-Himalaya by five passes, namely, the Sela-la, Chang-la-Pod-la, Angden-la, Tseti-lachen-la, and Jukti-la, of which the first four had been entirely unknown. But between the Angden-la and the Tseti-lachen-la I had been obliged to leave a gap of quite 330 miles in the exploration of the Trans-Himalaya. Of this region nothing was known but the summits Ryder had seen from his route, and which he and Wood had measured by

observation. We also possessed some uncertain statements of Nain Sing's journey in 1873, but his route lay to the north of the blank patch, and this blank represented an area of 5300 square miles. I could not return home without having done all that was humanly possible to traverse the unknown country by at least one route. Precisely there was the line forming the watershed between the Indian Ocean and the inland drainage of the salt lakes on the Tibetan plateau. There many lakes and rivers might be expected to exist, and there lay the large province of Bongba, of which so many hazy reports had reached our ears from its northern, eastern, and southern boundaries. But the greatest and most important question of all was: Does the Nien-chen-tang-la run right through Tibet in a westerly and north-westerly direction to the north of the Tsangpo and the upper Indus? No European and no pundit had hitherto ventured on this problem; but Hodgson, Saunders, and Atkinson had many years before laid down a hypothetical range on their maps of Tibet. Did it actually exist? Or was a labyrinth of ranges hidden under the white space, or a comparatively flat plateau, on which foundation isolated snowy peaks and chains were based? Hypotheses are absolutely worthless compared to proved facts. Such facts I would procure. I knew that if I did not succeed now in penetrating into the country which on the latest English map of Tibet (1906) bears only the word "Unexplored," one fine day another explorer would come and rob me of this triumph. And this thought I could not endure.

In Gartok my old friend from Leh, the rich merchant Gulam Razul, was staying. I consulted him, and he was to be my delivering angel. He took a very sanguine view of our position, for the Garpun owed him 7000 rupees for goods delivered, and feared his influence; he could therefore put pressure on the Viceroy of western Tibet. He first tried stratagem, which, however, completely failed, for the Garpun replied he was too fond of his head to expose it to risk by assisting a European who had no permission to travel

about the country. Then we tried gold, but the Garpun answered most theatrically: "If this house were of gold and you offered it to me, I would not take it. If you travel on forbidden roads, I will send armed men after you who will force you to return hither."

He was incorruptible, and he was too strong for us. How sorry I was now that I had not proceeded eastwards when I was in enjoyment of complete freedom at the source of the Indus and in Yumba-matsen! But no, that was impossible, for my cash-box was then not full enough, I had only five men with me, and I could not have left the rest of my caravan to their own devices.

What if I went down into Nepal and came back again into Tibet by unguarded roads? No, that would not do, for snow would soon close the Himalayan passes. And if we tried to slink through to Rudok and thence make eastwards? No, Rudok swarmed with spies. And soon Gulam Razul learned also that the Garpun had sent orders throughout his territory to stop me in case I attempted to travel even to Ladak by any other than the main high-road.

Thus we planned this and that, and mused day and night, sometimes in my tent, sometimes in Gulam Razul's, and waited for the consignment from Simla, heard bells jingle when couriers came from the east, saw one merchant after another return from the fair in Lhasa, met the *serpun* or gold commissioner who came from Tok-jalung, and felt the cold of autumn cut our skins more sharply as the thermometer fell to $-11°$.

Then in lonely hours I came to the resolution to return to Ladak and thence, as in the year before, penetrate into Tibet from the north, traverse the whole country once more, and cross the blank space. I knew very well that by this round-about way it would take half a year to reach districts situated only a month's journey from Gartok. A new caravan would be necessary, new dangers and adventures awaited us, and winter was before us with its Arctic cold. But it must be done in spite of everything. I would not turn back until the

obstacles in my way became quite insuperable. To enter Ladak, a country under British protection, was a risk, and therefore I must make all haste to cross the frontier again. I could not avoid Rawling's and Deasy's country, but what did it matter? My aim was the unknown region, which I would try to explore by some route or other.

Gulam Razul and Robert were the only ones who were initiated into my new plans, for in them I could place the blindest confidence. During our conferences we spoke in Persian, and Robert kept a watch that no eavesdropper came near my tent. Gulam Razul undertook to get together the new caravan from Leh, and it was to reach at a certain time Drugub, where I meant to dismiss my last thirteen men; they were worn-out and longed to get home. Gulam Razul undertook the responsibility of finding me fresh men.

On October 20 we left Gartok to await in Gar-gunsa the arrival of the consignment from India. Gulam Razul, Thakur Jai Chand, the postmaster Deni Das, and the doctor Mohanlal, also moved thither. Robert had heard in Gartok the sad news that his elder brother had died in Further India, and now he received a fresh blow, for his little brother, ten years old, had been drowned in Srinagar. He was inconsolable, and begged me to let him go home to his mother, who had now only one son left. So I was to lose him also.

Gulam Razul had three large tents within his fence of boughs. There he sat like a pasha on his divan, smoked a large silver narghilé, and received his guests with Oriental dignity. He was jovial and agreeable, undertook to do everything, and thought nothing of difficulties. There we made our plans and long lists of things to be bought, and as my arrival in Ladak could not be kept secret for long, we spread the report that I wanted a new caravan for a journey to Khotan, and that I intended to travel to Pekin in the spring. For the success of the plan it was essential that no one should have any suspicion of my real intentions; for in that case, especial orders would be sent to Rudok and to the nomads. My own servants and all Hajji Nazer Shah's household believed therefore that it

was my settled purpose to go to Khotan, and that I had given up all thoughts of Tibet. I even went so far as to send a telegram from Drugub to Reuter's correspondent in India, my friend Mr. Ruck, with the information that I was about to make a short journey to Khotan. The object was to mislead the mandarins. If no one else would help me, I must help myself, and, if necessary, with cunning and trickery. None of my Indian friends must have any suspicion of my real plans, not even Colonel Dunlop Smith; it would, of course, be silly to put them in a position where they must either betray me or be disloyal to their own superiors. Except Gulam Razul and Robert, only my parents and sisters were let into the secret. But, unfortunately, I had given them a far too optimistic estimate of the length of my enterprise, and therefore when they heard no news they became day by day more uneasy, and at last came to the conclusion that I had come to grief.

On October 29, 1907, Gulam Razul's mules arrived, and were subjected to a thorough inspection. They were in splendid condition—small, sturdy, and sleek animals from Lhasa, accustomed to rarefied air, and, according to the owner, capable of enduring hardships of every kind. Gulam Razul even offered to buy them back at the price I paid, if they returned alive. I paid for all the twenty 1780 rupees. I still possessed five of my own animals, after a small white mule had been torn to pieces by wolves in Gartok. A whole pack had attacked our last six animals, the camp watchman had been unable to drive the wolves away, and the mule had been horribly wounded. He had been seen running before the wolves with his entrails trailing on the ground. The last mule from Poonch still survived, as well as my little Ladaki grey and one of his fellows, the veterans of Leh.

Gulam Razul also undertook to procure for me fifteen excellent horses from Ladak at a price of 1500 rupees. The other purchases consisted of: barley for the animals, 60 rupees; rice, 70 rupees; *tsamba*, 125 rupees; provender sacks,

60 rupees; clothes for the new men, 152 rupees; butter, 80 rupees; tea, 50 rupees; stearin candles and sugar, 104 rupees; a Lhasa skin coat for myself, 40 rupees; and a sleeping-bag of soft goatskin, also for myself, 25 rupees; in addition there was the hire of the pack animals which conveyed my baggage to Leh, 40 rupees, and the cost of transporting the newly purchased goods from Leh to Drugub, 20 rupees. Eleven men were to be enlisted in Leh, all having served in Hajji Nazer Shah's commercial house and known as honest respectable people. They were to receive 15 rupees a month each, though their usual wages had not been more than 12, and three months' pay in advance. The caravan bashi was to receive 50 rupees a month and be selected with very great care. My whole debt to Gulam Razul amounted to nearly 5000 rupees, for those who had had the trouble of making all these purchases were to receive a douceur over and above. I sent a note of hand to Colonel Dunlop Smith, with directions that this sum should be paid to Gulam Razul, in order that he might have security if I did not return from this journey.

On October 30 Gulam Razul sent his son to Leh to equip the new caravan, which was to reach Drugub, ready in all particulars, on November 30. For the valuable services rendered me on this occasion Gulam Razul afterwards received from H.M. King Gustaf of Sweden the gold medal "for distinguished service," and I recommended him to the Indian Government for the title of honour, Khan Bahadur; of course I based my appeal in this case on the great commercial services he had rendered to the Indian Empire.

In Gar-gunsa I heard news of a new treaty between Great Britain and Russia, which had been concluded in October of this year. "Great Britain and Russia bind themselves not to allow any scientific expedition of any kind whatsoever to enter Tibet for the next three years without previous agreement, and call upon China to act similarly."

It seemed as though this clause were especially designed to meet my case. I said not a word to Gulam Razul about it. But I saw that I could no longer travel in Tibet as a European.

Last year I had been successful when the political situation was still unsettled, but I had taught both the Chinese and Tibetans a lesson, and shown them that it was possible for a European to travel right across the country. I had also placed a weapon in their hands against me. I should not be able to manage it a second time. Now they would keep their eyes open along the periphery of the inhabited country. I must travel in disguise to attract as little attention as possible. Another courier was therefore sent to Leh to procure me a complete Ladaki costume in Mohammedan fashion. Gulam Razul also was of opinion that, considering all circumstances, it would be wisest to travel as a merchant. The new caravan leader was to be our master, while I myself should figure as "the least of his servants," and keep myself out of sight in all negotiations.

The whole affair was a desperate game, a political and diplomatic game of chess, the stakes being my own life or great geographical discoveries. I, who had hitherto stood on the most friendly and confidential terms with the Tibetans, must now avoid them as enemies. I should not be able to see any Tibetan face to face, and should have to conceal my own eyes in order not to be caught. Therefore a large pair of round goggles with dark glasses was bought; inside them I fastened polished glasses of the strength suited to my sight. My European outfit was restricted as much as was at all possible; the large camera and the boat were sent to Leh with my other baggage, and I took with me only a small Richard's camera.

The main point was that in inhabited districts I should conduct myself with Oriental self-control and be entirely passive. The outcome of this mad plan was to me enshrouded in impenetrable darkness. I only knew that I must go northwards from Drugub in the direction of the Karakorum pass, then turn to the east and south-east, and endeavour to cross from Lemchung-tso the blank space lying to the south of Bower's route in 1891, and thence continue my journey through the great blank patch on the north of the upper Tsangpo. If

I were successful, I would go south to India either through Nepal or through Gyangtse, where perhaps I might have an opportunity of meeting Major O'Connor, as I had always wished to do. Gulam Razul advised me to be very cautious, for the Rudok-dzong had a paid spy in Drugub, who had to report on the movements of Europeans on the English side of the frontier. This spy was one of the most dangerous reefs in my fairway; the suspicion of the Tibetans was at once roused when they found that I had bought twenty mules from Gulam Razul. The Garpun sent a messenger to find out what I wanted them for. He was told that they were for a journey to Khotan.

Thakur Jai Chand had an excellent *jamadar* whom he sent to meet the baggage coming from India. At length, in the beginning of November, we received news that the consignment was coming. Then Robert proposed to go to meet our wished-for guests with some of our new mules. Late on the evening of the 6th they all turned up when I was already in bed. They were five policemen from Rampur, one of them suffering from inflammation of the lungs and more dead than alive. When Robert met them they were so starved and exhausted that he had first to massage the whole party to put new life into them.

I at once gave orders to light a roaring fire and serve tea. They came up with their laden mules, two Mohammedans, three Hindus—all in dark blue uniforms with tall blue-and-white turbans, rifles, and bayonets. I bade them welcome, thanked them for the excellent way in which they had performed their task, and made their corporal give me an account of their difficult and trying journey over the Ayi-la. Then they were shown to sleeping-places in a tent, and next day I looked through the nine chests sent to me by Colonel Dunlop Smith. Three of them contained 6000 rupees in silver, all of the Queen's reign, none of the King's, for the Tibetans will not take rupees on which King Edward's face is stamped. The other boxes contained tinned meat of all kinds, preserves, chocolate, cheese, cakes and biscuits; cigars, cigarettes, and

tobacco; gold and silver watches, and revolvers with ammunition, for presents; cartridges for two of our guns; note-books and map paper; a whole library of new novels, including Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*—a present from O'Connor and suitable reading for the adventurous time before us; an anemometer and a hydrometer, presents from the chief of the Central Meteorological Institute in Simla, Dr. Gilbert Walker; and a host of other necessary and acceptable articles. The amiable Colonel, his equally amiable sister, and his daughter, had had no end of trouble in selecting and purchasing the things, packing them up and transmitting them to Tibet. It was owing to their kindness that I was able for a long time to live like a prince, and I cannot be sufficiently grateful to them.

Now I had nothing more to wait for. The policemen were well paid, and I also bore the expense of their return journey and gave them winter clothing; took a hearty farewell of my sincere friend Gulam Razul, without whose help the new journey would have been impossible; thanked Thakur Jai Chand and the other Hindus for their kindness, and started off on November 9, 1907, north-westwards along the course of the upper Indus.

On the 26th we reached Tankse, where the dignitaries of the district and even the *tesildar* of Leh came to meet us. They had already heard that I intended to travel to Khotan in midwinter. The following day was to be a day of rest, for here I was to discharge all my old servants except Robert and the Gurkha, Rub Das. When I had breakfasted, Tsering carried out the plates and dishes, which now had many chips out of their enamel. "This is the last time, Tsering, that you will wait on me." Then the old man began to weep, and hurried out quickly.

Then I summoned all the men to my tent and made them a speech, telling them that they had served me faithfully and obediently, and had well earned the comfort and repose that awaited them by their domestic hearths in the bosom of their families. I wished them good fortune and prosperity in the

future, and reminded them of the loss we had all sustained by the death of Muhamed Isa—good old Muhamed Isa, who when we were last at Tankse, had made all arrangements so cleverly and conscientiously. And to show them that we were not the only ones who mourned for him, I read them what Younghusband, O'Connor, and Rawling had written to me about the deceased.

While their five horses and five yaks were being loaded with all their belongings, they came to me in my tent, one after another, to receive their pay and an extra present. Tsering, Rehim Ali, Shukkur Ali, and Tundup Sonam received especial gifts of money, the latter three having exposed themselves to danger on my account. Old Tsering asked to be allowed to keep the lame dog from the Ngangtse-tso; its bark before his hut in Leh would remind him of the time when the dog kept watch at our camp-fires. Shukkur Ali kept another dog from the same country. Now I had only the brown puppy, which, with Robert and the mule from Poonch, were among the oldest veterans of the caravan, all three having accompanied me from Srinagar.

And then came the bitter moment of parting. So much grief, such loud weeping! They could hardly tear themselves away. The *tesildar* was quite overcome at witnessing the deep attachment of my simple followers. The bonds were strong that were now torn asunder, for there is nothing which knits men together so firmly as common sufferings and dangers. I myself felt a catch in my throat, and, as the men reluctantly followed their yaks down the road to Drugub, I stood and watched them until they were out of sight. Then I dried my eyes before going into my tent, where Robert and the *tesildar* were waiting for me with tea and cakes served up by Rub Das. I could not help thinking of a funeral repast after an interment, at which a wreath of violets had been laid on the grave of a departed friend.

Next morning I awoke to new surroundings. All my old companions were scattered to the four winds, and now they were gone all seemed empty and deserted. Robert read off

the meteorological instruments as usual, and Rub Das laid my breakfast as noiselessly as an elf. I was glad that in spite of everything I felt not the slightest irresolution. The same angel who had protected me on my former journey would again attend my steps. I seemed to hear once more in the distance the rustle of his wings in the cold winter nights on the Chang-tang.

CHAPTER LV

A NEW CHAPTER

As soon as we were ready we mounted our horses and rode down to Drugub. Soon the old village came in sight with the house in which I had dwelt six years before, and the garden in which we had halted in the year 1906. On a terrace below the village stood our three tents and a fourth. The *jamadar* Ishe, old Hiraman, who never omitted to greet me, and young Anmar Ju, another of my old friends, salaamed and presented to me my new men. These three had orders from the *tesildar* to accompany me to Shyok.

"Who is the caravan bashi?" I asked.

"I am," answered a little wrinkled old man called Abdul Kerim, and wearing a large yellow skin-coat.

"What are the names of the others?"

"Kutus, Gulam, Suen, Abdul Rasak, Sedik, Lobsang, Kunchuk, Gaffar, Abdullah, and Sonam Kunchuk."

"You are then eleven men altogether—three Lamaists and eight Mohammedans?"

"Yes, Sahib."

"I shall at some future time take down your names, ages, places of abode, the journeys you have made, the services you have been in, etc."

It turned out that very few of them had ever been in the service of a European, but all had been employed by Nazer Shah, and his son Gulam Razul answered for them. Four had been in Lhasa, and almost all the Mohammedans in Yarkand, and all seemed pleasant and cheerful, and were in the prime of life.

"Which of you is my cook?"

"I am," answered Gulam, a comical little fellow, who immediately received a lecture from Rub Das how I was to be attended on.

"Are you all Ladakis?"

"Yes, Sahib, all except Lobsang, who is a Tibetan from Gar-gunsa, but has married in Leh and has served with the Hajji Nazer Shah."

I was somewhat loath to take a Tibetan with me on a journey where it was essential to keep the Tibetans as long as possible in the dark. If danger threatened, how easily he could betray me to his countrymen! I considered whether I would not exchange him for another man, or simply leave him behind. But how often had I reason subsequently to rejoice that I had not given effect to the suggestion! With the exception of the four Russian cossacks and Robert, Lobsang was the best servant who ever accompanied me on my journeys through the wilds of Asia. He was a splendid man, and I cherish a warm recollection of him.

All were now welcomed into my service, and I expressed the hope that they would perform their duty as faithfully as their predecessors, promised them an extra donation of 50 rupees each if I were contented with them, and told them that I would pay the expenses of their return home from the point where our journey ended, just as I had done before. When it was known in Leh that I wanted fresh servants for the journey to Khotan, Guffatu and all the men I had sent home from Tokchen presented themselves and begged earnestly to be restored to my service. But the old Hajji had received strict directions from his son. Not one of my old servants might accompany me this time, for it would increase the danger if we met Tibetans with whom we were already acquainted.

The new horses seemed fine and strong, and stood, eating hay and barley, in a long row along a wall, beside the mules and the veterans from Leh. They were to be well fed, for the days of feasting would soon be over, and it would be well if they put on flesh, on which they could fall back in evil days.

All the goods ordered were of the best quality, and packed in new strong boxes covered with leather.

On the morning of November 29, 1907, three Tibetans came from Rudok-dzong and set up their tents on our left wing. There, I thought, now espionage is beginning. An hour later we heard the sound of bells up in the valley. The noise became louder and louder between the cliffs, and a great din was raised as thirty-four fine little mules with loads of salt passed by my tent. All had a chain of small bells round their necks, most of them were adorned with red and blue ribands, and some had large red tassels hanging at their chests, which almost touched the ground and swung about at every step. It was a bright and lively scene, and the jingle of bells allured me out to fresh adventures in distant regions. In the twinkling of an eye the animals were relieved of their loads and driven up the valley like a herd of wild asses, to graze on the scanty grass among the granite. The owners must then be traders. They afterwards came into my tent, took tea and cigarettes, and asked Abdul Kerim whither we were travelling. He answered without lying, "To Khotan." It was I who lied. But had I told the truth, I should have been stopped in fourteen days, and might as well have gone home at once.

We had three new tents. The two larger accommodated my eleven servants; the smallest, which was so small that one could only stand upright under the ridge-pole, and could only hold a bed and two boxes, was mine. I wished to have one as small as possible that it might more easily be kept warm. All my baggage was re-packed. I gave some superfluous articles to Robert and to the Rev. Mr. Peter in Leh. There was a very thorough sorting out, and only what was absolutely indispensable was packed, filling two boxes, one of which chiefly contained Swedish and English books, sent by my sister Alma and Colonel Dunlop Smith. As soon as they were read, they would be offered to the winds. When I moved at night into my new tent and laid myself to rest in the large sleeping-bag lined with sheep's wool, and covered myself, I was as warm and comfortable as in a bed at home.

Gulam Razul's son, Abdul Hai, visited me, and our business matters were transacted with him. Robert remained responsible for my heavy baggage until he had deposited it in the house of the Hajji Nazer Shah. It consisted of ten regulation horse-loads. In my leisure hours I wrote a heap of letters, which Robert was to hand in at the post-office in Leh.

We had now 21 mules and 19 horses, the brown puppy, and a large yellow dog from Gartok. All the mules and horses, except mine and Abdul Kerim's saddle-horses, carried loads. I rode my little white Ladaki, which had grown marvellously strong again, and was as spirited as one of the new horses. He and two others were the survivors of the large caravan which had, on the former occasion, set out from Leh. In order to make sure that Abdul Kerim took sufficient provender, I told him he must not think that I would follow the direct road like ordinary caravans. I might make excursions right and left, and often remain stationary for a week at a time. He must, therefore, provide barley for the animals for two and a half months, and he must take care that the provender we took with us lasted out. But it is stupid to trust to others. All the heavy baggage from Simla, the silver money, and the tinned provisions made four loads; Gulam's chests of kitchen utensils two; the tent, the bedding, and the belongings of the men made several loads; all the other animals were to be laden with rice, barley, and *tsamba*. We also took 25 sheep from Tankse.

In the night of December 3 the thermometer fell to −10.1°. Next morning all the baggage was packed up and carried down the valley to Shyok by coolies. Two fellows, as strong as bears, carried my two tent-boxes. The animals carried only their new saddles. One group after another marched off, and at last I remained alone. Then I shook hands with my faithful companion, Robert, thanked him for his invaluable services, his honesty, his courage, and his patience; asked him to greet for me the missionaries, Dr.

Neve, and warm India; took leave also of honest Rub Das and all the others; mounted into my new Ladak saddle on my trusty white, and rode down to the Shyok valley with Anmar Ju. I was the last remaining of the original caravan, and was surrounded by men who were complete strangers to me. But I was also strange to them, and they had no suspicion of the foolhardy adventures I intended to lead them into. The wind, however, was the same, and the same stars would twinkle in the sky during the cold silent nights in Tibet. So I should not be quite alone.

It is little more than 6 miles to Shyok, and yet this short distance took almost eight hours. We had to cross the river six times, which just below the village of Drugub has cut a deep narrow passage between rocks of granite and gneiss. The first crossing was easy, for there the river had been frozen over in the night, and though the ice cracked, we passed over by a path strewn with sand. At the second passage the river was open, but broad and shallow, and the ice belts on both sides had been strewn with sand. The third, where we had to cross over again to the right bank, was very awkward, because ice belts suddenly ending in the middle were flooded in consequence of a damming up of the ice lower down. They could not therefore be strewn with sand, and we had to be careful lest we should fall out of the saddle when the horses set their feet down in the water 3 feet deep. It is little more agreeable when he jumps up on the opposite edge, and his hoofs slide about before he can get a firm foothold on the smooth ice.

Below this place was the fourth crossing—the worst of all—and here the whole train had come to a halt. On the right bank, where we stood, the river was broad and deep, with icy cold, dark-blue, transparent water winding down, but at the left bank lay a broad belt of ice. Suen, a tall, black-bearded man with very Jewish features, bared his body and examined the ford on horseback. In so doing he got into water so deep that his horse began to swim. Then he jumped in himself and swam to the edge of the ice, where it cost him

great effort to climb up. 'Poor man! I shivered as I looked at him; he had been quite under water.

Four of the others made an attempt a little higher up, and got over, but they were up to their necks in water. Then the whole troop of mules and horses were driven into the river; the horses managed best. One mule, I felt sure, would be lost. He made no attempt to hoist himself on to the ice until he had been pelted with stones from our bank. And when at length he was up and was following the track of the others, the ice cracked and gave way under him, and there he lay enclosed. All five men had to pull him out and drag him over the ice to solid ground.

Barely 100 yards farther down is the fifth ford. Between the two stands a steep, smooth, projecting rock, its foot washed by the river. It is, however, possible to climb over the rock up small fissures and over slight projections and thus avoid the two detestable fords. Here all the baggage was carried over by the coolies, and I myself climbed over the rocks barefooted; a short way beyond this crag a strong man carried me over smooth flooded ice. Here we had plenty of time for meditation, while the animals were again driven through such deep water that they almost had to swim. All were wet up to the root of the tail and many had water over their backs. The poor creatures stood together closely in a group, with pieces of ice hanging from their flanks and knocking together like castanets. We kindled a fire that the five men who had been in the water might undress, dry themselves, and change every stitch of clothing.

Then we went some distance downstream to a place where the heavy provisions were piled up on the bank, and the poor animals had to enter the icy water before they had got warm again. Here the baggage had to be carried over the water by stark-naked men, who tried with staves in their hands to keep their equilibrium among the treacherous rounded stones in the river-bed. An elderly man was seized with cramp when he was half-way across, and could not move a step. Two bold youths jumped into the water and dragged him to

land. Two mules, which could not be induced by coaxing or scolding to enter the water, were tugged over with a rope. I had a guide before my horse, which was wet half-way up the saddle, so that I had to tuck up my legs as high as possible, and in this position it was very difficult to keep my balance, as the horse made unexpected jumps among the blocks. The men raised such a loud hurrah that the mountains rang again when I was over the last ford with a whole skin; a blazing fire prevented any ill effects from my foot-bath. Every man, who came across shivering, dripping, and blue with cold, had to sit down immediately by the fire. I could not understand why they were not frozen to death.

Then we rode in the twilight up and down hill, and it was pitch dark before a welcome blazing fire showed us that we were near the village of Shyok. We gathered round it as we came up, and delighted in its radiating heat. I could not help consoling myself with the thought that, if any pursuers followed me up from the English side, they would at any rate get a cold bath before they found me.

In the night the temperature fell to only 15.4°, but here we were at a height of only 12,365 feet. We stayed on December 5 in Shyok, to dry the pack-saddles and give the animals a day's rest after their trying work. In the evening the men held a farewell festival, for Shyok was the last village in Ladak. As soon as the drums and flutes were heard, all the women and girls of the country flocked to the dance.

On December 6 we took leave of our last friends, and marched down the slopes to the floor of the Shyok valley, where the altitude is 12,300 feet; it was the lowest spot we were in for a long time. For from here we mounted northwards up the valley excavated by the great affluent of the Indus. There is no road or path to speak of, only rubbish and rounded boulders, but the scenery is wonderfully fine, and gigantic granite crags tower up on all sides. We crossed the river five times, which here carries about 420 cubic feet of water and has belts of ice of varying breadth. A solitary starved wanderer from Yarkand met us, and was given a meal

of *tsamba*. We pitched our camp among the bushes in a bed of sand at Chong-yangal, where I stayed in the year 1902.

We were now alone. Only one man not belonging to the caravan was still with us, Tubges of Shyok, who had charge of our sheep during the early days of our journey, especially at the fords. In the evening I had a conversation with Abdul Kerim, Kutus, and Gulam. I now told them that I would not travel to Khotan by the ordinary road, because I knew it already. We would strike more to the east, and the sooner we came up on to the plateau the better. They replied that Tubges knew the country well. He was called in to the consultation. What if we went through the Chang-chenmo valley to Pamzal and the Lanak-la? "No," he answered, "that is impossible; one can go as far as Oro-rotse, but there the valley becomes as narrow as a corridor, and ice cascades and boulders cover the bottom of the valley. Animals cannot get through even without loads." It was then evident that we must continue up the Shyok valley and watch for an opportunity of diverging eastwards.

So on the 7th we went on between grand mountain gables, silent and solemn, like Egyptian pyramids, like cathedrals and fortress towers. Between them detritus cones descend to the valley floor, where their bases are eroded by the high water of the summer flood and cut off in perpendicular walls. It must be a magnificent spectacle when the turbid thundering water rolls down from the melting snow of the Karakorum and fills all the valley, making its way with tremendous force to the Indus. An enormous block of perhaps 70,000 cubic feet has fallen down; it has cracked in falling, as though a giant had split it with his axe; one fancies one can see the gap it has left on the heights above. Four times the path crosses the stream, and the rather narrow opening of the Chang-chenmo valley is left on the right. We encamped among the dunes of Kaptar-khane. In the night the temperature fell to 2.5°.

The way is terribly trying, nothing but detritus and blocks of grey granite, against which the horses wear out their shoes. Again we crossed the river twice and set up our tents in the

oasis Dung-yeilak, where a worn-out caravan from Khotan had already settled, and had sent a messenger to Nubra for help, as several of their horses had foundered.

As long as there was pasturage we could take matters quietly and make short marches. Only too soon the grass would come to an end, and then we must make more haste. So we rested a day when the merchant Muhamed Rehim from Khotan arrived at the oasis with his caravan. But he only remained an hour, for he wanted to reach warmer regions, and was glad to have the Karakorum pass behind him. He earnestly advised me to wait till spring, for the snow lay deeper than usual on the pass. One of his caravan men also came to me and gave me a handful of dried peaches. "Does the Sahib remember me?" he asked. "Certainly, you are Mollah Shah." The good fellow, now fifty-seven years old, and with his beard greyer, had never visited his home in Cherchen again since he had left my service in the spring of 1902. What a singular wandering life, full of toil and adventure, these Asiatics lead! He implored me to engage him again, but I told him he ought to be glad to go down into Ladak instead of returning to the frightful pass in the middle of the icy winter. It would certainly have been pleasant to have with me an old tried companion. But no, he would have been out of place in my Ladaki company. Mollah Shah told us for our encouragement that a large caravan had lost fifty-two horses on the pass, and had been obliged to leave behind the greater part of their goods.

None of my people knew yet my actual plans. As long as we were on the great winter route to Eastern Turkestan they must all believe that Khotan was my destination. We had also the advantage that all who met us would report in Ladak that they had seen us on the great highway, and thus no suspicion would be aroused.

December 10. It was colder, the minimum temperature being $-2.4°$. My Curzon hat was burned in the fire. In its place I put on a large skin-cap which Muhamed Isa had sewed together, and wound round it a pugree as a protection against the sun. Arms of the river with a gentle current were covered

with glittering ice, but the main stream, now much smaller, was nearly free. At the camp at Charvak a spring brook dashed down the rocks in a tinkling cascade, though the cold did all it could to silence it. The animals were driven up the slopes where the grass was better. A huge fire was lit when the day declined and a narrow sickle of a moon stood in the sky. Where the animals were driven up, there was a thundering fall of stones in the night, and some blocks rolled down and lay among our tents. It was a dangerous place.

We had a cold march on the way to Yulgunluk. When thick snow-clouds cover the sky, the wind blows in the traveller's face, and the temperature at one o'clock is 14.9°, one feels the cold dreadfully, and has to tie a thick neckcloth over the face. The valley is lifeless and deserted. Hitherto we had only seen a hare, an eagle, and a raven; the last followed us from camp to camp. Six times we crossed the stream; the brown puppy was carried over, but the yellow dog found his way across—he howled piteously whenever he had to go into the cold water.

In Yulgunluk also, at a height of 13,455 feet, we encamped a day. Now the thermometer fell in the night to −6.2°. This was the last really pleasant and agreeable oasis we came across. During the day of rest we heard the horses neighing with satisfaction on the pastures and the sheep bleating. The loads of provender were already smaller, so we could load four horses with good knotty firewood. On the right side of the valley rose a snowy mountain. As early as two o'clock the sun disappeared, but it lit up the snow long after the valley lay in deep shadow; the sky was blue and cloudless. In the evening the men sang at the fire just the same melodies as their predecessors. The winter days are short, but they seem endlessly long to one tortured by the uncertainty of his cherished hopes. By eight o'clock the camp is quiet, and at nine Gulam brings in the last brazier after I have read the meteorological instruments. How I long to get out of this confined valley on to the plateau country! Here we are marching north-north-west, and I ought to be going east and

south-east. If we could find a way up to the Chang-tang by one of the valleys to the east, we should be saved much time and many a weary step.

On December 13 we looked in vain for such a way. We crossed the river twice more on its ice-sheet. At the second ford the whole caravan passed over dry-shod, and only my small white horse broke through and I wet my feet. After a third crossing we camped in a desolate spot just opposite the Shialung valley. It looked promising. Tubges and Kutus were sent up the valley to spy out the land. In the evening they returned with the tidings that we could go a fairly long distance up the valley, but beyond it became impassable owing to deep basins, abundant ice, and large boulders, just as in the Drugub river. We must therefore keep on the route to the Karakorum pass. This increased the risks for the caravan, for it lengthened the distance; but, on the other hand, it lessened the danger of discovery, for when once we had got into Tibet we could avoid the most northern nomads.

Now Tubges begged permission to accompany me to the end, and his petition was eagerly supported by all the other men. I was the more willing to take him that he was a skilled hunter. I had now twelve men, and I made the thirteenth in the caravan. But we were not superstitious.

CHAPTER LVI

UP TO THE HEIGHTS OF DAPSANG

HEAVY clouds and piercingly cold wind increased the difficulty of our march on December 14 up the valley. We saw two bales of goods, sewed up in linen and with the stamp of a Turkestan firm, lying on the ground, as though they had fallen from a dying horse, the carcase of which we had passed. Higher up two more. They contained silken materials from Khotan. So far the caravans come with failing strength after excessive exertions on the pass. They are like ships which must throw their cargo overboard when they begin to sink. At Köteklik also we found passable grass and firewood. Gulam is a capital cook; he prepares me the most delicate cutlets and rissoles, and for a change gives me chickens and eggs.

On the 15th there is little water in the valley; it runs under rubbish, but farther up the river is again fresh and clear. We frequently pass the remains of unfortunate caravans—dead horses, bales of goods, and pack-saddles from which the hay has been removed to save the life of a dying horse. We travel west-north-westwards, and therefore ever farther from our goal. But at length we come to a valley which will lead us in the right direction. We leave the Sasser valley to the left and enter a valley portal full of treacherous ice, often as thin as skin. We wait till our scouts have tried the ice, which they declare to be impassable. Tubges, however, finds another, longer way, over steep hills, and at their foot we pitch our camp.

Next morning we went over a steep spur of porphyry to

reach a better place on the frozen river which was to afford us an easterly passage up to Murgu. We crossed again and again the strip of ice, which was first strewn with sand that the horses might not break their legs. As usual, two scouts went in advance. One of them came back and called to us from a distance that a fallen rock closed up the valley. On reaching the spot I found that a landslip had lately taken place. The blocks of porphyry barring the channel were as big as houses, and between them the river formed deep basins covered with a thin coat of ice. We had therefore to turn back and retrace our steps all the way down to camp No. 279, over the terrible rock, which on this side was so steep that each animal had to be shoved up separately, and the men had to look out for themselves when a pack got loose and rolled down the acclivity. Then we went some distance up the Sasser valley. A strong icy wind blew in our faces. Beside a wall of rock the dogs put up a hare which took refuge in a hole, but Kunchuk pulled him out again and he was condemned to be eaten. Our camp this time was in an almost barren place, and after all the fording of the river during the day icicles clinked on the flanks of our wearied animals.

It is evening again. The mountain spurs project, dark and rugged, into the valley like huge sarcophagi, and on them rest moonlit snow-fields like shrouds. The Ladakis sing no more; their ditties are frozen on their lips. It is awfully quiet. The kitchen fire flickers with yellowish-red tongues in the white moonshine. One can almost hear the sound of the frost outside.

After Gulam has brought in the last brazier I undress myself, put on my large woollen dressing-gown, set myself a while right over the fire to get a little heat into my body before I creep into my lair of fur, and smile to hear the yellow dog, who is lying outside, and barks and snarls at the increasing cold in the angriest and most comical tones. No wonder he is enraged, for the thermometer falls in the night to −12.8°. Then I hear a singular squeaking in Gulam's tent. We had already anticipated a happy event, and now I inquired whether there

was an addition to the Puppy family. Four small puppies had again come into the world. They had waited for the very coldest night we had yet experienced. Gulam had contrived a cage of frieze rugs in which Puppy lay, licking her young ones. Two of the tiny animals were of the female, two of the male sex; the former were drowned, for we thought that the others would grow stronger if they monopolized all the milk and heat that would otherwise have been divided among four. I sat by the hutch and studied the interesting group till I was so stiff with cold that I could hardly walk back to my tent. Next morning the tiny curs were going on splendidly; one of them whined in quite the orthodox fashion, and no doubt thought what a grim cold country fate had launched him into. We determined to take good care of them, for they would be pleasant companions for me. Up here they would at any rate be immune from the sickness which had carried off their elder sisters. Kunchuk had to carry them against his bare skin to keep them warm. Half-way Mamma Puppy was allowed to occupy herself for a while with her little ones, though these did not seem quite to understand the milk business.

We had a bad march on December 17. No shouts of encouragement were heard, but the caravan moved on slowly and apathetically. Within half an hour our feet were benumbed and lost all feeling. I wound the ends of my *bashlik* like a visor several times round my face up to the eyes, but the breath turned it into a thick crust of ice which froze to my moustache and beard, which I had allowed to grow since leaving Gartok to suit my intended Mohammedan disguise. All the men put on their furs. Dust and soil flew about, and our faces had a singular appearance.

At a place where a Yarkand caravan was encamped, we turned to the right up a very narrow valley, in which the floor, covered with bright milky-white ice, looked like a marble pavement between the rocky walls. Fortunately the Yarkand men had strewn sand over the ice, but still it did not prevent several of our animals from falling, so that they had to be loaded again.

When we at length camped in Long the temperature was at

zero even at three o'clock. A second large Yarkand caravan, on the homeward journey, was halting here. The leaders asked us to travel with them over the Karakorum, but I refused, with the excuse that we could make only short day's marches. Observation by any who might tell the Chinese in Yarkand that I had again passed over into Tibet was exactly what I must avoid above everything.

Here lay a poor man, both of whose feet had been frost-bitten on the Karakorum, so that the flesh and toes actually fell off. He crawled up to our camp and wept over his disastrous fate. He had been engaged with the Yarkand caravan we had met first, but as he had become incapable of work owing to his wounds, the barbarous merchant had dismissed him in the midst of the wilds and left him behind. In such a case it is hard to know what to do. We could not cure him, and to take him with us or give up a part of the caravan for him was out of the question. He said himself that he would crawl to Shyok, but how was he to get across the river? I let him warm himself at our fire, drink tea and eat, and on the 18th, when we went on after 56½° of frost in the night, I gave him *tsamba* for several days, matches, and a sum of money which would enable him to hire a horse from a caravan travelling to Shyok.

This day's march took us eastwards to a place called Bulak (the spring); it should properly have been called Guristan (the graveyard), for here lay at least twenty dead horses. During a ride of two hours I had counted sixty-three carcases of horses; it is wonderful that trade on this caravan route, the highest in the world, can be profitable.

From there the route ran up the narrow fissured Murgu valley, at first up and down over hills, where numbers of dead horses, which had once been strong and fat, showed us the way. Then we descended a break-neck path into the deep valley where spring water at the bottom formed cracked domes of ice. Then on the slopes of the left flank we climbed again up a zigzag path; the snow became deeper and was piled up, especially on the path, so smooth that if the horses had made a false

step we should have been lost beyond recovery. The landscape was magnificent, but it could not be properly enjoyed when the temperature about one o'clock was only 0.3°. And then again we went down headlong to the valley bottom, where we passed over a natural bridge of rock improved by the hand of man. Our direction had been east, but now we diverged more and more to the north and north-west.

The snow becomes deeper, the sun sinks, the shadows creep up the reddish-yellow hills, the wind is stronger, and one thinks: If this lasts much longer I shall freeze. At last we halt at the foot of a terrace on the right side of the valley, where the sheep are driven into a cave to keep them warm in the night. I slip down from the saddle with all my limbs numbed, and long for a fire. Not a trace of organic life was to be seen at camp No. 283. The horses and mules were tethered so that they stood in a close pack.

At this unlucky camp I made the first discovery on this new journey through Tibet. Abdul Kerim came to me at the fire and said:

"Sahib, we have barley for eight to ten days more; but in that time we shall reach Shahidulla, where we can get everything."

"Eight to ten days! Are you mad? Did you not obey my orders? Did I not tell you expressly to take barley for 2½ months?"

"I brought a supply with me which was enough for the journey to Khotan."

"Did I not tell you that I was not going to Khotan by the ordinary route, but by roundabout ways which would demand at least two months?"

"Yes, Sahib, I have acted wrongly," answered the old man, and began to sob. Abdul Kerim was an honest man, but he was stupid, and had not the great experience of Muhamed Isa.

"You are caravan bashi, and the duty of a caravan leader is to see that there is sufficient provender for the journey. When the ten days are over, our animals will starve. What do you mean to do then?"

"Sahib, send me with some animals to Shahidulla. I can be back again in a fortnight."

"You know that everything that happens in Shahidulla is reported to the Amban of Khotan. The Chinese must know nothing of our intentions."

My first notion was to dismiss Abdul Kerim at once and to write to the Hajji Nazer Shah for more provender, which might be brought up on hired animals. But what would they think in western Tibet and Ladak if I sent for more provender from Leh when I was barely eight days' journey from Shahidulla, which lies on the direct road to Khotan? My whole plan would be betrayed and must fail. I should be stopped by the first nomads, perhaps by the English whom I had so happily escaped hitherto. It was only necessary to forbid the natives to supply me with provisions and baggage animals. And if I procured all we wanted in Shahidulla, the Amban of Khotan would send word to Kashgar, whence a telegraph line runs through Asia to Pekin, where His Excellency Na Tang proved so absolutely immovable when the Swedish Minister Wallenberg had given himself so much trouble to obtain for me permission for a new journey through Tibet. Up here in this desolate valley my position was strong. We had sneaked quietly and cautiously through British territory without exciting suspicion. But as soon as we came into contact with the outer world we should be caught.

I sat in my tent all the evening, considering the matter from all sides, and measured the distances on my map with compasses. We were about 100 miles from my camp No. 8 of the preceding year, where the grass was so good. So far we could travel without the least difficulty. But beyond we had 430 miles more, to the district on the Tong-tso. However, before we came there we must meet with nomads and grazing land The horses, indeed, would be lost, but the Tibetan mules were, so Gulam Razul said, accustomed to shift for themselves, and they were not given barley. The first step was to reach the free open Chang-tang and get out of this frightful mousetrap, Shyok valley, which was always taking us further north-north-

west. Even if we had to sacrifice everything and creep on all fours to the nearest tent, I would not give in: I would not depart a hair's breadth from the original plan.

Night came with a clear sky, twinkling stars, and sharp frost; by nine o'clock the temperature was down to −20.4°. The animals stood quietly crowded together to keep themselves warm. When I awoke occasionally I did not hear them, and they might have vanished. The minimum was reached at −31.2°. When I was awakened, Kutus had been out on the prowl into a broad valley, coming in from the east, and had found a road which, as far as he could see, was excellent. We had still two days' journey from camp No. 283 to the dreaded Karakorum pass, which I wished to avoid. If we ascended the side valley eastwards, we should soon arrive at the main crest of the Karakorum range and be spared two days' journey. I resolved to try it.

So we travelled on December 20 to the east-north-east over crunching snow. The valley looked very promising, especially as old horse tracks could be seen in some places. In the middle of the valley was the bed of a brook covered over with smooth, treacherous ice, but elsewhere there was nothing but detritus. After we had passed a hill thickly overgrown with *burtse* tufts, all vegetation ceased. At one o'clock the temperature was −5.8°. My beard was white with rime, my face-cloth turned into a mass of ice, and all the animals were white. For hours we slowly mounted upwards. In some places the valley was so contracted that it was only 2 yards broad. The best of the day was over when the caravan suddenly came to a halt. All was quiet in the front, and I waited with Kutus for whatever was to happen.

After a time came Abdul Kerim, much cast down, with the news that the valley was impassable at two places. I went to look. The first barrier of rocks might be forced, but the second was worse. We could certainly have dragged the baggage over the ice between and under the blocks, but there was no passage for the animals. Should we try to make a road along which the animals could be helped over the blocks by

the united strength of the men? Yes; but first men must be sent up to find out whether there were more of such barriers to cross. When they came back with the news that the way was still worse above, I gave orders to pitch the camp, as the shades of evening were falling.

Good heavens, what a camp! Not a blade of grass, not a drop of water! Again we sat in a mousetrap between steep mountain walls, where, at any moment, devastating blocks might be detached from the sides by the frost. The horses scraped about in the snow looking for grass. During the night they roamed about, and stumbled over the tent ropes. The thermometer fell to $-30.6°$. One puppy lost his way, got outside, and came of his own accord into my tent; fortunately for him I was awakened by his whining, and gave him shelter in my bed, where he was warm and comfortable.

A frosty morning! we must take care not to touch metal, for it burns like fire. A mule made his way into my tent and looked for something edible in my washing-basin. To his great astonishment it stuck to his nose, and he took it a few steps with him. The hungry animals had consumed two empty sacks and six ropes during the night, and played the mischief with one another's tails. In winter, life up here is a desperate struggle with the frost.

The orders for the day were to encamp in a place where there were stalks of *yapchan* and *burtse*, and remain there all the next day. I set out at a temperature of $-23.8°$ and found the camp all ready on the right side of the valley. The animals were immediately sent up the slopes, and there grazed with a good appetite on the dry frozen stalks. During the day of rest, pieces of ice were hewn out of the brook and melted in the two large kettles of the men. Horses and mules were then able to drink their fill.

In the night a most welcome change took place in the weather, the whole sky was overcast, and the thermometer fell only to $1°$; it felt quite warm in the morning. Some mules had stampeded, but Lobsang found them after a diligent search. I set out with Kutus soon after the caravan. We

had not gone far when we saw Muhamed Isa's white Shigatse horse lying frozen stiff in the snow. He had been in a wretched state for some days, and the last hardships had been too much for him. Worn-out and emaciated he really needed a long, long rest.

After a while we passed the valley junction and the unlucky camp No. 283, and were again on the great caravan route, the road of dead horses. Four lay in a ravine quite close together, as though they did not wish to part even in death. A large dapple-grey showed no change, but another horse looked as if it were stuffed, and a third, with its outstretched legs, resembled an overturned gymnasium horse. Some were nearly covered with snow, and others had fallen in a curious cramped position, but most of them lay as though death had surprised them when they were composing themselves to rest after violent exertion. Nearly all were hollow: the hide was stretched over the back-bone and ribs, and they looked intact from the back, but on the other side it could be seen that they were only empty, dry skeletons, hard as iron, which rattled when the yellow dog, who had nothing else to eat on the way, pulled them about. The dogs barked at the first carcases, but soon they became familiar with the sight of them. What sufferings and what desperate struggles for life these dreary mountains must have witnessed in the course of time! Lying awake at night one fancies one hears the sighs of worn-out pack animals and their laboured breathing as they patiently go towards their end, and sees an endless parade of veterans condemned to die who can endure no more in the service of cruel man. When the dogs bark outside in the silent night they seem to bark at ghosts and apparitions who try with hesitating steps to make their way out of the snowfields that hold them fast, and intervene between them and the juicy meadows of Ladak. If any road in the world deserves the name "Via dolorosa," it is the caravan road over the Karakorum Pass connecting Eastern Turkestan with India. Like an enormous bridge of sighs it spans with its airy arches the highest mountain-land of Asia and of the world.

Higher and higher our slow train ascends the fissured valley where here and there small glacier tongues peep out between the steep crags. Frequently old camping-places are seen with ripped-up pack-saddles. Hurricanes from the south prevail here; fine red dust from weathered sandstone flies like clouds of blood through the valley and colours the snowfields red. The valley shrinks to a hollow way where a somewhat more sheltered spot bears the name "Daulet Bek ulldi" (where Daulet Bek died). Who was he? No one knows; but the name has remained. Probably an ordinary trader from Khotan or Yarkand, or a pilgrim who died on his wanderings, and therefore found the doors of paradise wide open. For over the Karakorum Pass runs the main pilgrim route from Eastern Turkestan to Mecca.

The valley becomes ever smaller—a mere corridor between walls of red conglomerate. This is the Kizil-unkur, or the Red Hole, an appropriate name. Here the caravan has pitched its camp. Not a sign of organic life. The animals stand in a group, and the mules gnaw at the frozen dung of former visitors. From this hole the way rises up to the Dapsang plateau, where a snowstorm is now raging, and even in the valley flakes of snow dance and whirl in the air. In the twilight Tundup Sonam comes up with only twelve sheep; the others have been frozen to death on the way. Night falls threatening and awful on the everlasting snow. Everything up here is so dreary and cold (16,824 feet); there is nothing living far and wide, and yet the yellow dog fills the ravine with his barking.

The men set up the tents near together, and a very scanty fire burned among them, for we had to be economical with the firewood from Köteklik. The Mohammedans started a low charming song in rising and falling tones, and now and then a strong voice intoned a hollow "Allahu ekber." When Gulam came with the brazier I asked him what it meant, and he said that it was a *namas* or hymn of prayer to Allah, that the Most High might protect us in the morning from the snowstorm. For if a caravan is caught in a snowstorm on the heights of Dapsang it is lost.

I often heard this melodious hymn again in days of hardship, and it always affected me painfully. Not as the reproachful warning clang of church bells ringing for service, when I pass a church door without going in, but because the men sang the hymn only when they were out of spirits and considered our position desperate. It seemed as though they would remind me that defeat awaited me, and that this time I had aimed too high.

CHAPTER LVII

ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

On Christmas Eve 1905 I had dined with Mr. and Mrs. Grant Duff in the hospitable English Embassy, and on another day supped with Count d'Apchier in the French Legation, and was invited to a reception by Count Rex in the German Embassy, —all in Teheran, now in such a disturbed state. The same day twelve months later I had still Muhamed Isa and Robert with me, and we were in inhabited country. Little I dreamt now that old Asia would demand still another Christmas Eve in my life and that on December 24, 1908, I should sit at table amid a circle of pleasant and intelligent Japanese in distant Mukden, where a few years before the thunders of war had rolled above the graves of the Manchurian emperors. But this year, 1907, I was quite alone, and with twelve satellites on the way to my—Ukraine.

In the morning with a bright sun and calm weather the caravan marched slowly up towards the heights of Dapsang, while Kutus and I followed in the crunching snow. I had given Abdul Kerim orders to wait at the top. After I had read the instruments and found a height of 17,808 feet, I scoured the horizon with my field-glass—a confusion of snowy mountains. Only to the north-east a broad erosion furrow sloped gently down, and I chose that direction.

"Now we leave the Karakorum route and ride eastwards," I said; "follow my track; I will ride in front." The men stared in astonishment; they had looked forward to the gardens and vineyards of Khotan, and I offered them the

granite and snowstorms of Chang-tang. They said nothing, however, but silently and patiently followed in my footsteps. It was not easy to lead the way, for the country was covered with deep snow. I directed Kutus, and he went before my horse to test the depth. The ground was quite level, but contained hollows where the snow lay 3 to 6 feet deep; and the crust was exceedingly treacherous, for sometimes it broke, and I was thrown out of the saddle, while the horse plunged and floundered like a dolphin, and was almost suffocated in the fine dry snow. We therefore turned back to try another direction.

Lobsang, who was always on the alert when we were in a critical situation, was already looking for a better way. But we must in any case cross the valley, and the men tramped out a furrow in the snow, through which the animals were led one at a time. The horses managed best, while the mules often fell and caused long delays. How far would this snow extend? It checked our progress and concealed any wretched pasture that might exist in some ravine. We crawled on like snails. I went on foot, and my skin coat felt as heavy as lead. But after several hours of hard toil we reached the terrace skirting the right side of the valley, where the snow was thinner and we made more progress.

Camp No. 287 was in the most desolate spot I can remember in all my travels, except the sandy sea of the Taklamakan desert. Behind us our trail wound through the white snow and in front all was snow. The animals were tethered close together, and they had a feed of corn in the evening.

After the day's work was over I lighted two candles—usually I had but one—and set up the portraits of my family on a box, as I had often done before on Christmas Eves in Asia. At half-past eight o'clock the moon rose gloriously over the mountains to the east-north-east, and at nine the thermometer had sunk to $-16.8°$. I could not get the temperature above $-4°$ in my tent, and my hands were so benumbed that I could not hold a book, but had to crawl into bed, which was

the best thing to do—there one forgets Christmas with all its precious memories and its melancholy solitude.

The thermometer sank to −37.5°. A horse lay frozen hard in his place in the line; the others stood stupefied, with drooping heads, and great icicles on their noses. Christmas Eve brought us good weather. I almost longed for a snowstorm. We had no fear of pursuit, but if a Turkestan caravan now went down to Kizil-unkur, the men would see our trail in the snow and report that we were off to Tibet. A snowstorm would obliterate all traces.

Meanwhile we stumbled on eastwards through the snow. A spring supplied water where all the animals got a drink. We halted in a ravine with tufts of *yapchan* (17,087 feet). The animals made greedily for the dry hard stalks, which also provided us with a grand fire, and this evening it was warm and comfortable in my tent. I rejoiced to think that the days would again become longer, and subtracted the length of each day's march from the distance between us and the Tong-tso. Ah, would we were there! And there we should be only on the northern margin of the blank space. What an immensely long way we had to travel!

Next day we followed the same flat valley eastwards between mountains of moderate height, making use of a path worn down by Pantholops antelopes. The snow became less deep and was only occasionally troublesome, usually covered with a crust as dry as parchment. When we had encamped in a perfectly barren spot, I consulted with Abdul Kerim. Only two sacks of barley were left. I saw that he had been weeping, and therefore I restrained my wrath. The others, too, were astonished and doleful. I had not yet said anything to them, but they understood that there was no question of Khotan. The men had *tsamba* for nearly three months and rice for two. I therefore ordered that some should be given to the horses when the barley was finished, but enough should be left for the men to last two months. The others gathered outside the tent during the consultation. Lobsang was calm and unconcerned, and could be heard

singing and whistling as he watched the animals. I took to him most, perhaps because he was a Tibetan; but I liked them all, for they were capital fellows. In the evening they sang hymns to Allah, knowing that our situation was exceedingly critical.

Next day we started early, and I rode at the head of the caravan. We all had severe headaches, but the height was enormous (17,644 feet). We had marched little more than a mile when we found sparse grass in a slight hollow on the northern slopes. That was a Christmas box. Here we pitched our camp. The animals ran up to the pasture with their loads on. How they ate! It was a pleasure to see them. Suen cut ridiculous capers between the tents. The men were in high spirits. I heard no more hymns to Allah, but the caravan bashi, who seemed to think he was in some degree responsible for the spiritual welfare of all the Mohammedans, usually read every evening at sunset one of the five daily prayers. Our supply of fuel was at an end, but Lobsang found a hard moss which burned for a long time and gave out plenty of heat. Now I perceived that when we should some time part, I should miss Lobsang most.

On December 28, leaden clouds lay over the earth, and therefore the cold was less severe. We continued our course eastwards, and marched slowly till we came to a spring, which at the orifice had a temperature of 33.6°. The water felt quite warm; it formed large cakes of ice in the flat valley, which looked from a distance like a lake. While the men set up the tents here, Puppy, as usual, took charge of her young ones in a folded piece of felt. One of them had a white spot on the forehead and was my especial favourite, for he never whined unnecessarily. To-day he had opened his eyes and given a short glance at the cold inhospitable world around him. However, before my tent was ready, he died quite suddenly, and was buried under some stones that the yellow dog might not eat him up. Mamma Puppy looked for him, but soon contented herself with the last of the four. We would do all we could to keep this little creature.

On the way to the next camping-place, No. 292, we still followed the same blessed valley which had afforded us such an excellent route since Christmas Eve. The minimum temperature had fallen to −21.8°, as though a cold wave were passing over the country. At one place some wild yaks had left their visiting-cards, and the men collected a sack of dung. Evidently these animals come hither only in summer; the winter is too cold even for them. A mule died before we reached a spring surrounded by fair grazing. So far we had got on well, but had made little progress; on the past six days we had covered only 47 miles.

December 30. With a minimum of zero and a temperature at one o'clock of 3.2° the range between day and night is not great. But now the sky was covered with dense clouds; it snowed and became half dark; the men could not tell in which direction they were marching, and asked where the sun rose. We had the help of the longitudinal valley for another day's journey, and we followed it down to a junction of valleys where there was a huge sheet of ice. On the way I saw a flock of twenty-two wild sheep, which fled with great agility up a slope of detritus, bringing the stones rattling down.

In the evening I informed Abdul Kerim, Gulam, and Kutus that we were to advance into Tibet and steer our course past the Arport-tso to the upper Brahmaputra. And I told them that I should travel in disguise in order to escape notice. They were amazed, and asked if I should not expose my life to danger daily; but I calmed them, saying that all would go well if they only obeyed my orders implicitly. Our chief concern was to preserve our animals, for if the caravan were lost we should never get on. "Yes," answered the caravan bashi, "if we only find good pasture, so that the animals can rest and eat their fill, we can certainly hold out for two months, but they will not bear long marches."

Here we stood at a parting of the roads. Our valley opened into another, which came down from high mountains in the south, part of the Kárakorum range. The united streams continued their course northwards, and could not

be any other river but the upper course of the Karakash Darya; in its lower valley on the Khotan Darya I had many years before almost lost my life. Now the question was whether we should go up or down, and we decided to devote the last day of the year to finding out which was the better road, sending out Abdullah to reconnoitre south-eastwards, Tubges north-eastwards. As in any case we should have to cross the ice sheet, a path was sanded.

We packed the 6000 rupees Colonel Dunlop Smith had sent from India in two sacks, which were lighter than the wooden boxes, and these were to be used as firewood some time when all else failed. At every camp our baggage became lighter, as our provisions diminished, and I threw away one book after another after I had read them. I had received from home the numbers of a Swedish journal for half a year, and these were very useful in lighting our camp-fires. We had still nine sheep left, but the time was fast approaching when our meat supply would come to an end, for we could hardly reckon on finding game so soon.

New Year's Day 1908 was bright and sunny—a good omen as regarded the dark riddles this year concealed. The two scouts returned with the same report: that there were no obstacles in the way; and I let them discuss the question themselves, and decide which way was the best. They chose Abdullah's route, which led up the valley south-eastwards. The road here was excellent. At the mouth of the valley we found a couple of small round stone walls, which, however, might very well have been a hundred years old. The sight of a dead yak had an enlivening effect on us, contradictory as it may sound. Higher we mounted to where a lofty snow mountain with glaciers could be seen at the end of the valley. Then we stopped, and scouts were sent forwards. They declared that the way was impassable, and voted that Abdullah should be thrashed. But as such measures would have been of no use to us in our difficulty he got off with a good scolding. He admitted that he had not been so far up as we were now, yet on his return he had asked for, and been given, a bit of

tobacco for his reconnoitring work. I told him that he had done a mean trick, and that he should never see the smoke of my tobacco again.

There was nothing to do but pitch our camp. A strong south-west wind blew, and fine snow was driven down from all the crests and summits. When the men went out to gather fuel they looked like Polar explorers. After all, New Year's Day had brought us no good luck, but, on the contrary, a retreat.

This was commenced early on the morning of January 2, and we passed again camp 293, and marched onwards over slopes of detritus on the eastern side of the ice sheet. At one spot spring water formed a little bubbling fountain in the midst of the ice. After the valley had turned to the east-north-east we encamped in a corner where driftsand was piled up into hillocks.

I wanted to get out of this labyrinth of mountains and valleys which pour their waters into Eastern Turkestan. We were still in the basin of the Karakash river, and must sooner or later cross a pass separating it from the salt lakes of the Chang-tang. On the 3rd we again mounted up one of the head valleys and camped in its upper part, while the country was enveloped in a furious snowstorm. It continued till late in the evening, and what was most remarkable was that the stars shone all the time though the snow was falling thickly. Before, there had been blue-black clouds above us without a snowflake. Extraordinary land!

Next day we rested. The animals had been without drink for a long time, fuel was abundant, ice was taken from the river bed and melted in pots.

In this region the mountains are less continuous, and form sharp peaks and pyramids of small relative height. It snowed all night, but the morning of January 5 was fine as we travelled eastwards along the route Kutus had investigated. It led up over snow-covered ground to a small pass (17,995 feet), on the other side of which another branch of the Karakash crossed our course. We must get out of this entanglement,

which delayed our march and told on our strength. As long as the animals kept up we had nothing to complain of. I was glad of every day that brought us a little nearer to spring and out of the winter's cold. It penetrated through everything. My feet had no feeling in them. Gulam rubbed them and massaged me in the evening over the fire, but could not bring them to life. The ink was turned into a lump of ice and had to be thawed before the fire; when I wrote I had to bend over the brazier, and still the ink congealed in the pen and froze on the paper. Singularly enough I have still an unquenchable desire for ice-cold water and prefer it to warm tea, but the water we usually get is far from pleasant. It is generally Tubges who takes a spade and fills an empty sack with snow, and then melts it in a kettle. Gulam tries to persuade me to drink tea, and cannot understand how it is that I am not sick of water. It is no use being thirsty in the night: a cup of water standing near the brazier is frozen to the bottom in a quarter of an hour.

After a temperature of $-28°$ and a stormy night, which drove the animals to seek shelter in the men's tent, we crossed the broad valley up to the next pass. We left a lofty snow-covered mountain to the south. At the foot of a hill a wild yak was musing. When he saw our dark train against the white snow he made straight towards us, but before long he took his way through the valley and dashed in wild flight to the north, followed by our two dogs. It was very encouraging to find something living in this God-forgotten wilderness; for now we had lost even the raven.

It was a steep and slow ascent up to the pass, which had a height of 18,005 feet. We were surprised to find that it was a snow limit, for east of the pass there was no snow at all. As we descended the other side along a broad, open sandy valley we had to be careful that we did not find ourselves without water in the evening. Far to the south appeared an ice sheet, but it lay too far out of our course. We therefore filled two sacks with snow from the last drift, encamped where thin tufts afforded fuel, and sent five men

with all the animals southwards to the ice in search of water and fodder.

The water question now became pressing, for apparently we could not count on snow much farther. And we could not dig for water, as before, for the ground was frozen into stone. We must therefore proceed cautiously. We had a great open wilderness in front of us; we must make our way from one point of support to another, and explore the routes in advance, lest we might come to a catastrophe. I therefore gave orders that, now that the loads were considerably smaller, a couple of our animals should carry snow or ice. At every camp we left an empty meat-tin. I think less of the time soon approaching when the excellent goods from Simla will come to an end than of the fact that the burdens of our animals are daily becoming lighter. The rock specimens I collect do not weigh much. Of course the provender has long given out, but where the pasturage is scanty or altogether absent, loaves of parched meal are kneaded together for the animals.

The men are to come back on the 7th, and we wait for them till mid-day. There, too, they come: the black group is plainly visible; they march and march, but come no nearer. Ah, it is only some black stones dancing in the mirage. A little later Suen reports that some of the animals have run away, and consequently we have to remain the whole day at this dismal camp.

How slowly the hours pass on a day like this! I am a prisoner in my own tent, for cold and wind keep me from work out of doors. As long as the sun is above the horizon I pass the time very comfortably, for I can see the mountains, these silent, dreary, lonely mountains, where men never wander, and I see the sand-spouts whirling along before the wind. But when the sun sets, the long winter evening begins, and I hear only the howl of the storm without. Patience! Spring will come some time. Every day that passes we are a step farther from this horrible winter. Brown Puppy and her whelp keep me company, and I look upon them as comrades in misfortune. She has her mat in a corner of the tent, and takes her meals

when I do. The whelp we call Black Puppy amuses me immensely. He has begun to take notice of the world and the life around him. When the big dogs bark outside the tent, he turns his head and gives a feeble growl. When his mother leaves him on the mat in the cold, he makes an attempt at a bark and seems to think it strange. He wanders about the tent, though he is still so unsteady on his legs that he constantly topples over. He has already conceived a highly salutary respect for the brazier, and sniffs and shakes his head when he chances to come too near it. Sometimes it happens that he misses his mother in the night, when there may be as many as 54 degrees of frost in the tent; but his complaining squeal awakens me, and I take him under the furs—an attention he is very fond of. One morning he awakened me by crawling of his own accord on to my pillow and trying to get into my bed. After that I felt no concern about his future; he must learn how to make his way in life, and that he was doing.

On the 8th we went over a small pass 17,569 feet high. A horse and a mule perished on the way. Camp 299 was pitched where the first pasture was found, in a valley on the other side (16,946 feet). There was no water, but we had four sacks of ice. Seven sheep were left, and the raven had also come again.

The aim of our next day's journey was to find water for the animals. My trusty white Ladaki horse, which I always rode, used to get my washing water every morning, and I used no soap that I might not spoil it for him. From a small rise in the ground we were able to enjoy the view I had so longed for—the great open plain we had crossed in the autumn of 1906. To the east-south-east I easily recognized the spur we passed then, and we could not be more than two days' march from the Aksai-chin lake. I had now followed for several days much the same route as Crosby, and at the lake I should cross my own route of 1906, after which we should go down towards the Arport-tso, and, as last year, intersect the paths of Bower, Deasy, Rawling, and Zugmeyer.

The whole country lay under a vault of dense clouds.

After a march of only 3 miles we found a flowing spring of beautiful water (33°), where camp No. 300 (16,329 feet) was pitched. In the evening my servants sang bright and happy melodies again, and Suen performed his most ridiculous dances. We were again up on the roof of the world, and all dreary Tibet lay in front of us. Should we be able to cross it with our little caravan?

CHAPTER LVIII

FORTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO

WITH fresh blocks of ice in our sacks we set out on January 10 straight towards the projection at the foot of which camp 8 had been pitched, and where I knew that the grass was good. The great level barren plain stretched between us and the spot, and we had 15 miles to cover. The wind was boisterous, and we were frozen through in a minute. In the lee of the caravan, which went in advance, lay a cloud of dust like smoke. The yellow hue of the grass could be seen from a distance, and the sight so refreshed my men that they began to sing on the march. The animals understood that they were coming to good pasturage, and quickened their pace without any shouts from the men. The tents were set up in the same place as last year, and here I closed my long circuitous route through Tibet. It was with a melancholy feeling I saw this place again, where Muhamed Isa had raised his tall cairn. Now we had avoided all dangers from Rudok, and we minded little that England and Russia had promised each other not to let a European into Tibet for three years. The height here was 16,198 feet.

For several days I had spoken of this place with its good pasturage, and when we broke up our camp on the 11th I was able to promise my men a still better camp for the next night. They were astonished that I was so much at home in these dreary regions. The track of the great caravan of 1906 was blown away by the passage of many storms, but the Aksai-chin lake soon came into sight, its surface looking grey and dismal

in the chilly weather. Six kiang spoors converged to the fine spring of fresh water near the shore, where we kindled our fires among the same stones as last time. Pasturage and fuel are abundant in the neighbourhood; it is a veritable oasis—the best camp we had had since Köteklik. But the storm still raged, and the salt waves rose high over the lake, cooled down to 20.7°, though there was no sign of ice. In the night it snowed hard again, and on the 12th, which was made a day of rest, the lake lay blue amidst a landscape of shining white.

When all goes well the Mohammedans read no prayers. Probably they think that when we can help ourselves it is unnecessary to disturb Allah.

We had to pay a horse as toll for the good pasturage. He lay frozen hard in the camp on the morning of the 13th, after a night temperature of −18.4°. The yellow dog remained beside him, and when he came late at night into the next camp, he was so fat and puffed up that it was evident he had stored up food for several days. Two ravens followed us with their hoarse croaking. Snow fell thickly and hid the view. A herd of antelopes disappeared like shadows in the mist A sheep died on the way, and two more had to be killed, for they were worn out; we had now only three left. The cold penetrated everywhere in the night, and the thermometer sank to −33°.

On January 14 we made south-eastwards over a plain of soft, tiring ground, which caused us the loss of a mule. The caravan moved very slowly forward and in close order; the animals marched more comfortably when they were together; those which would linger behind, overcome with fatigue, were driven forward by the Ladakis. At camp 304 the grass was poor, and two mules seemed to be near their end. The cold was fearfully sharp in the night. The thermometer fell to −39.6°, or to nearly 40 degrees below zero, and almost to the freezing-point of mercury. That was the lowest temperature I ever recorded in all my journeys in Asia.

But January 15 brought a fine morning and an Italian

blue sky. Abdul Kerim and all the other Mohammedans waited on me, in a tragi-comical procession, with dried apricots and almonds, and a simultaneous cry of "Aid mubarek," or "A blessed Festival." One of the festivals of Islam fell on this day. Exceedingly comical was the procession of the four Lamaists, who came up as the others retired; and Lobsang, who led them, took off his cap and scratched his head in Tibetan fashion, but did not put out his tongue—he had no doubt learned in Leh that this performance was not pleasing to a European. I gave them 10 rupees each and handed the caravan bashi a watch, which he was to wind up well every evening to be sure of the time.

On we marched again, moving slowly, for the ground rose. We proceeded like a funeral procession, and Suen was the parson. There was no longer reason to fear thirst, for half the country was covered with snow. But every mile caused us a struggle, and it was long before we came to the cliff we were making for. We left a huge snowy massive on the right hand.

Next day's march took us over a flat saddle to a small side valley where there was some grass. The temperature had been down to $-29.9°$, and I could not by any means get life into my feet. Sometimes they ached, sometimes there was an uncomfortable pricking in my toes, and then again they lost all feeling. During the day's rest we allowed ourselves in camp 306 Tubges shot an antelope and an Ovis Ammon, a feat which prolonged the lives of our last two sheep. In the evening the men were cheerful and hopeful as they sat around the flesh-pot.

Gulam Razul had presented me with six bottles of whisky, which, sewed up in thick felt, had been brought all the way; for Ladakis maintain that when a mule shows signs of exhaustion and weakness it can be cured by giving it whisky or other spirits. But the bottles were heavy, so three of them were emptied and set up as a memorial on some stones. Perhaps some time or other they may be found by another traveller. The other three were kept.

On the 18th we continued to follow the same longitudinal valley. All the ranges in this country run east and west, the usual direction in Tibet. To the right was a lofty range we must cross if we would travel south-eastwards. Through a gap in the northern mountains was visible to the north-east the mighty snowy dome we had passed to the right of in 1906. Eastwards there seemed to be no obstacle in the way, but we diverged south-eastwards up a valley. Before we encamped another mule had fallen, and then we had lost a fourth of the caravan.

Next day we proceeded farther up the valley. Sometimes it was only 10 yards broad between solid horizontal terraces. Below a steep crag lay five pot-stones, and therefore Tibetan hunters must have come thus far. The Ladakis were delighted to meet with signs of human beings again. The valley opened out into an extensive plain, and a gap was seen to the south-east, but as the ground was lower towards the east we turned our steps in that direction. From the low threshold the view was anything but encouraging—a world of mountains. We resolved to encamp where we were (17,405 feet high) and to try the other, southern, passage next day.

A miserable camp! The storm raged so violently that the tents could hardly be set up, and the iron tent-pegs beat together and rattled until they were fixed. We had first to make a fire before we could use our numbed hands, and a small stone wall had to be raised to prevent the fire from being carried away. Now Nature and the elements were against us, whereas we might in the future expect opposition from man. The pasture was wretched, and a grey horse and the last mule from Poonch lay dead in the morning. It was the senior of the veterans, for it had come with me all the way from Srinagar and had done good service, and I was grieved at losing it. Now there was only one creature left which had seen the first beginning of the caravan, namely, our brown puppy. She and the little puppy kept me company in this oppressive, weary solitude.

From camp 309, where we stayed a day, there was an

uninterrupted view over another longitudinal valley, to the south of the former. There lay a contracted salt lake. At almost every camp, as on the former journey, I drew a panorama of the surroundings, and tried sometimes to paint small water-colour drawings. Then I had to sit in the opening of the tent and hold the block over the fire to prevent the brush freezing into a lump of ice. But the sky, which should have been of an even blue or grey tone, usually turned into a film of ice with strange stars and crystals.

In camp 310 we also remained a day, for the pasture was better than we had found for a long time. The grass grew in sand on the shore of a small freshwater lake with a free opening, where at length the animals got a good drink after having had to quench their thirst with snow. We had travelled 188 miles since Christmas Eve, or about 6½ miles a day on an average—a terribly slow pace. Now we had had a furious storm for three days, and here yellow whirls of sand flew over the ice and the wind moaned and rustled through the grass. Abdul Kerim sewed together a long Mohammedan coat for me, which I was to wear under my fur when I assumed my disguise.

On January 24 the whole country was covered with dazzling snow and the sun shone, but a stormy blast drove the fine snow particles in streaks over the land, and a roaring sound was heard. Antelopes careered lightly over the ground, dark against the white snow. A mule died on the way; not even Tibetan mules can bear this climate. I was benumbed and half-dead with cold before I reached the camp.

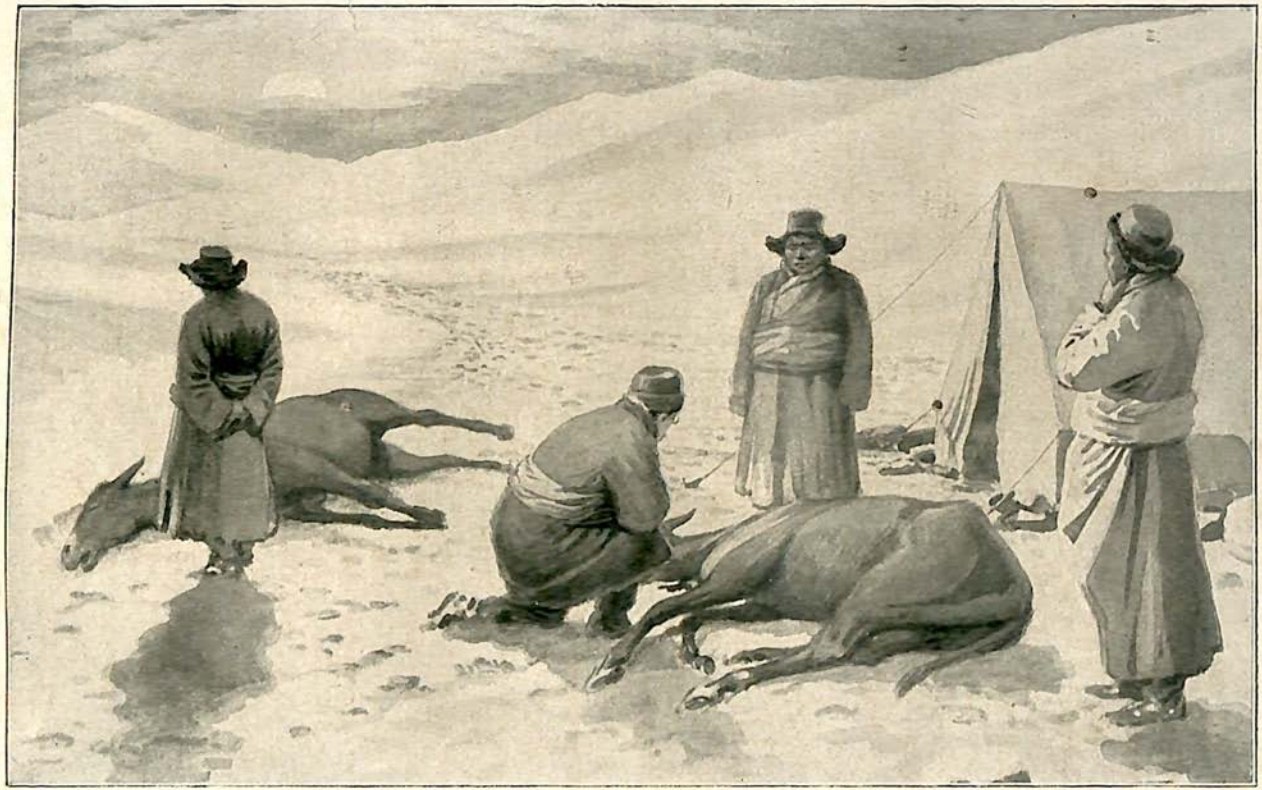
After a temperature of $-21.3°$ the neighbourhood was enveloped in semi-darkness by heavy clouds. The jagged mountains to the south reminded me of a squadron of armoured vessels at gunnery practice in rainy weather. Their grey outlines peeped out from the low clouds. The valley was about 6 miles broad. Towards the east the snow lay less thickly, and finally only the footprints of wild animals were filled with snow, like a string of pearls in the dark ground.

As I turn over the leaves of my diary of this terrible

journey how often I come across the remark that this was the hardest day we had hitherto experienced. And yet days were always coming when we suffered still more. So it was on January 26. The sky was covered with such compact clouds that we might fancy we were riding under a prison vault. The storm raged with undiminished violence, and a quarter of an hour after I had mounted my horse I was benumbed and powerless. My hands ached, and I tried to thaw my right hand by breathing on it whenever I had to take a note, but after reading the compass for two seconds my hands lost all feeling. My feet troubled me less, for I had no feeling at all in them. I only hoped I should reach the camp before the blood froze in my veins.

Then we come at length to the Arport-tso and leave the northern basin of the lake on our left, while a large basin swells out like a fjord towards the south. A mountain spur sends out a cape into the lake, which has a very irregular outline. It stands in our way. Shall we leave it on the right or left? We come up to the middle of the lake shore and wait while Lobsang goes to see if the caravan can travel over the ice. He hurries forward and makes us a sign to follow. We go down to the beach and along a spit which narrows down to a fine point.

Here the ice on our left hand has been piled up into hummocks, 6 feet high, of grand transparent green flat slabs, but on the right, as far as we can see over the southern basin, the ice spreads its level smooth sheet of a beautiful dark green colour like leaves of laurel and lilac. We feel the usual fascination of the ice, and stand and stare down into the dark cold depths. Drifting snow sweeps like comets' tails over the smooth course. We stand on the very point of the promontory, with the narrowest part of the Arport-tso in front of us, for the lake is contracted like a wasp's waist. Here there are fences, walls, and barriers raised by ice pressure, and between them snow is drifted up, hard and dry on the surface. It would have been quite impossible to march over the bare ice; the caravan would have been carried away like chaff before the



LOST BEYOND RECOVERY. *Vol. II. f.* 266.

wind. But the snow affords us an excellent path. Lobsang leads the way, guiding us in many a wind, but we get across and come to the farther shore at the foot of a cliff.

Worse followed, for the rocky point fell straight down to the lake on its eastern side, and here we had slippery ice swept clear of snow which we sanded. One horse or mule after another slipped and fell. Some of them made no attempt to get up again, but were dragged over the ice to firm ground, where their loads were put on again. Some fell with a heavy thud on the hard treacherous ice. We had to double a whole series of points in this way till we came to one where further progress was impossible, for at its foot issued forth springs which produced large openings in the ice. There icy-cold waves beat with a sharp sound against the edges of the ice under the lash of the wind, which drove continually clouds of snow dancing like elves over the dark green field of ice. We had to struggle up over steep slopes till at last we reached, thoroughly tired out, an inlet where a few leaves of grass grew. We had left a mule on the ice, and two men went back and gave it a drop of whisky so that it could come on to the camp. But my brown horse from Shigatse, which had so often carried me up to the east gate of Tashi-lunpo, remained behind for good. It is sad and depressing when a veteran dies.

Arport-tso lies at a height of 17,382 feet. The water, which was drawn from an opening in the ice, was quite potable. There was a high pass in front of us to the south-east, but we could not reach it in one day, and we camped on the plain at the south-east of the lake where Rawling had once stayed. It was little more than a mile thither, but the grass was good and the animals needed nourishment. It snowed thickly all day. It was warm and comfortable under cover, and we pitied the poor animals which were out grazing in the cold. The small puppy had grown so much that he could wander alone between the tents watching for an opportunity to steal meat. A sheep was slaughtered.

At night the cold was more severe again, and the

thermometer sank to −30.3°. The sick mule sought shelter behind the men's tent, lay down at once, and gave vent to a piteous sound. I went out to look at it, and caused it to be put out of its misery.

On the morning of the 28th we found two horses dead on the grass. One was one of the veterans of Leh which Robert had ridden, and which also bore me to the springs in the Sutlej bed. We had now only twenty-three animals left, and my small white Ladaki was the last of the veterans. Little I thought, as he carried me over the Chang-lung-yogma, that he would survive a hundred and fifty comrades. Every morning two long icicles hung down from his nostrils. He was taken great care of, and I always saved a piece of bread from my breakfast for him. I had a particular affection for him and for Brown Puppy. They had been with me so long, and had passed through so many adventures.

A loss of three animals in one day was serious for such a caravan as ours. How would it all end? We had still an immense distance before us. We struggled for three hours with halting steps up this terrible pass which had a height of 18,281 feet. We encamped in the shelter of a rock and killed the last worn-out sheep, and then had no more live store of meat.

The temperature fell to −24.5°, and the first sound I heard in the morning of the 29th was the everlasting howl of the storm. We marched south-eastwards through snow a foot deep. "One of our worst days." it is styled in my diary. We cared about nothing except to get to our camp alive. I had a scarf wound several times over my face, but it was quickly turned into a sheet of ice, which cracked when I turned my head. I tried to smoke a cigarette, but it froze on to my lips. Two horses died on the way, and Abdul Kerim's horse took over the load of one of them, while the man himself went on foot like the others. I followed the track of the caravan with Kutus. Then we found Kunchuk Sonam and Suen unable to go farther; they suffered from pains at the heart. I tried to cheer them up, and promised to give them medicine if they

would follow slowly in the track of the caravan. Was it now the turn of the men after half the caravan had been lost? Quite overcome with fatigue they hobbled at twilight into camp.

Abdul Kerim came into my tent very cast down and asked if we should fall in with nomads within ten days, for otherwise he considered our condition desperate. In truth, I could give him no consolation, but could only tell him that we must go on as long as there was a single mule left, and then try to drag ourselves along to the nomads with as much food as we could carry. Now we thought no longer of pursuers behind, or of dangers before us, but only wished to preserve our lives and come to country where we could find means of subsistence. Behind us the snow obliterated our tracks, and the future awaited us with its impenetrable secrets.

CHAPTER LIX

IN THE SNOW

THE storm howled round us all night long, and our thin tent canvas fluttered in the blast. Gulam awaked me with the information, "It is nasty weather to-day; we can see nothing." Even the nearest mountains were hidden by the snow, and if I had not already taken a bearing along the valley in the direction south, 35° E., we could not have set out. This day, January 30, we had to keep together, for the driving snow obliterated the tracks immediately. We had two leaders, and I rode last along the trail, which at first was marked as a black winding line, but farther on, where the snow lay 2 feet deep, no ground or rubbish could be seen. A brown horse which carried no burden lay down and died in the snow. We could see the snow making ready its grave before it was cold. It vanished behind us in the dreadful solitude.

We move forward at a very slow pace through the snowdrifts. The fury of the storm carries away the warning shouts from the lips of the guides and they do not reach our ears; we simply follow the trail. Lobsang goes first, and he often disappears in the dry loose snow and has to seek another direction. In the hollows the snow lies 3 feet deep, and we can take only one step at a time after the spades have cut us a ditch through the snow. One or other of the animals is always falling, and the removal of his load and readjusting it causes a block, for all must follow in the same furrow. All, men and animals, are half-dead with fatigue and labour for breath. The snow sweeps round us in suffocating wreaths; we turn our backs to the wind

and lean forwards. Only the nearest mules are plainly visible, the fifth is indistinct, and those at the front are seen only as slight shadows amidst the universal whiteness. I cannot catch a glimpse of the guides. Thus the troop passes on a few steps till it comes to the next block, and when the mule immediately in front of me moves on again it is only to plunge into a hollow filled with snow, where two men wait to keep up its load. The direction is now east and the ground rises. A few such days and the caravan will be lost.

At length we come to a low pass (18,268 feet high). Even at sea-level such a journey would be hard enough, but how much worse it is in a country which lies some hundreds of feet higher than Mont Blanc, and where there is nothing but granite. On the eastern side of the saddle the snow lay 3 feet deep in some places, and it seemed as though we should be stuck fast in the snowdrifts; and what had we to expect then? For the provender was coming to an end, and we must go on if we would find pasture. Now we went gently down, the snow became a little less deep, and we came to an expansion of the valley where there were stretches of ground swept bare by the blast. On the right appeared a slope where Abdul Karim thought he saw blades of grass sticking up out of the snow, and he asked permission to camp. It was difficult to set up the tents that evening. At dusk the two sick men came up, their faces blue and swollen.

A miserable camp! The storm increased to a hurricane, and nothing could be heard but its howling. When I looked out of my tent I could see nothing that was not white, and there was no difference between the ground, the mountains, and the sky—all being alike white. Not even the men's tent could be distinguished in the driving snow. The fine particles penetrated into the tent and covered everything with a white powder. It was impossible to look for fuel, and at three o'clock the temperature in the tent was 1.4°. I could see nothing living outside, and I might have been quite alone in this wilderness.

My trusty Gulam comes, however, at length with fire, for

Lobsang and Sedik have found some brushwood. Gulam says that Sonam Kunchuk is ready to lay himself down on the snow and die, but I advise him to take a good dose of quinine instead. Late at night the tones of the hymn to Allah reach my ears, sounding softer and sadder than usual amid the raging of the storm. We are moving towards a dark destiny, I have attempted too much, and any moment the catastrophe may come. We are snowed up here, the animals must die of starvation and I myself—well, it is but a question of time.

A little below the camp the valley made a turn to the right. Thither the animals had gone at night, but came back as there was no grazing. A grey mule had stayed behind to die. It lay in a curious position, as though it had died in the act of getting up—on its knees with its nose pressed against the ground, and was frozen hard in this position. Yet the temperature fell only to $-16.4°$.

The storm continued with undiminished violence on January 31. We loaded the nineteen mules and horses and marched down the valley at random in the same dense snow. The snow came down in incredible quantities; such a snow-storm I had never witnessed even on the Pamir. We could not travel more than $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and then we halted and pitched the tents, which looked dirty against the pure snow. Four big wild yaks were moving over the slopes, tramping like snow-ploughs. The dogs made after them, but soon gave up the chase, for they could not go far in the drifts. The animals received their allowance of rice, and then trailed off to a hill where they poked about for the scanty grass.

I examined all the baggage with the help of Abdul Kerim and Gulam, and discarded all that could be spared. Unnecessary clothing and worn-out boots were burned, and reserve garments were brought out. My articles, note-books, and instruments were stuffed into two small sacks. Writing materials and other things for daily use were packed in a small handbag from Stockholm. The other chests were used as firewood, when the men had stripped off the leather coverings to make new shoe-soles. Even the box for the

cooking utensils and the provision boxes were burned, and all the baggage was henceforth carried in sacks. By this means the loads were made lighter and more convenient, though there was more trouble in turning everything out of a sack when anything was wanted from the bottom.

In the afternoon there was a short break in the snowstorm. Beyond the white limits of the valley was seen to the south-east the large lake Shemen-tso, with a dark purple sky above it, presaging more snow. I took bearings of the next day's route, and it was well I did so, for soon the snow began to fall again unusually thickly. It snowed all day and all night, and a swishing sound was heard as the snowflakes were driven by the wind against the canvas of the tent and from time to time slipped down. In the morning of February 1 piles of snow lay round the tents. The minimum temperature was only $-0.8°$, and it felt quite pleasant. We loaded our weary hungry pack animals and marched slowly south-eastwards. The gale blew from the south, and the snow pelted on to our faces.

Silently and heavily the fainting troop moved on towards the lake. All the men's beards and moustaches were white with rime, and we seemed all to have turned grey in a night. Abdul Kerim walked in front with his staff, but he took a wrong direction, and I chose another leader. In some places we were nearly suffocated in the snow, and the crestfallen men stood in the drifts, at a loss what to do. But we plunged and floundered on a bit, and then stood still; then a little bit farther. The pass over which we had made our way the previous day was no doubt blocked by snow. Had we reached it two days later we should never have forced a way over it. Now our retreat was cut off, and we must seek safety southwards. It was some consolation to know that we had burned our ships.

Fortunately the ground sloped down, and as we toiled on hour after hour the snow diminished and travelling became easier. But the storm, which had now raged for a fortnight, showed no signs of abatement. Down on the western flat by

the lake the snow mantle was thin, and we encamped in a spot where the grass was not bad. I gave the men some cigarettes every evening—at other times they smoked yak-dung and filled their narghilés with tea-leaves.

The night was unusually mild, with the minimum temperature only 5.2°, but the clouds were as dense as ever and the snow fell unceasingly. It was dark all day, as though a curtain hung over the forbidden land. We stayed at camp 319. The storm blew from the south-west more wildly than usual. The animals grazed with their heads to leeward, and had to be driven windwards again every time they came to the edge of the restricted area of grass. On February 3, also, we remained where we were. All night long the hurricane had raged, tearing, raving, ploughing up the ground like a gigantic plough, and endeavouring to pull down our tents. In the evening I secured everything that could fly away if the tent were overthrown. In the morning all the animals had disappeared as though they had been carried away by the blast; at any rate, they had gone with the wind to the northern shore of the lake.

Immediately beyond our camp was a spring of fresh water and a round fold for sheep. I had ceased to look forward to spring, it seemed so hopelessly distant, and to be farther off every day that passed. Brown Puppy and Little Puppy kept me company as usual, and we played together to pass the hours of our imprisonment. Gulam continued to rub my feet, but with little result, for they remained numb and cold as ice. Then he brought two pairs of *paipaks* of thick felt and a pair of *charuks* or Yarkand boots of soft leather outside. They were really warmer than my Kashmir boots, which were ruthlessly burned.

CHAPTER LX

DEATH OF THE LAST VETERAN

STUDDED with twinkling stars the winter sky stretched its dark-blue canopy over our lonesome camp, and 50 degrees of frost foretold a clear day. On February 4 not a cloud hovered over the mountains, and this plateau, abandoned by gods and men, which had lately been buried under the white shroud of winter, was again illumined by bright sunlight. Sad news was brought me in the morning: a horse and a mule lay dead beside the tents. With the seventeen remaining animals we continued our journey along the irregular northern shore of the Shemen-tso (16,266 feet). The quantity of snow became less, and at camp 320 the gravelly ground was almost bare. The view over the lake was grand. Captain Rawling's map of this district is executed with great accuracy.

On February 5, also, we encamped on the shore of the great lake, having followed the curves of its bays and capes. A mule died on the way. Though we had burned all we could dispense with, yet the loads were much too heavy for the surviving animals. A big strong mule always led the van, at the heels of Gulam; it carried at least two ordinary loads, and yet was fat and fresh. There was no sign of human beings. A flock of jackdaws were perched on a crag. At the camp the provisions were inspected, and we decided to relinquish three heavy sacks of rice. The rice was to be given on the following days, mixed with parched meal and water, to the animals. Of my provisions, only two boxes of tinned meat, some jam and biscuits, were left. We had not

tasted meat for some time. The storm raged all day and the sun had vanished again.

On February 6 we passed a very abundant spring of water at a temperature of 46.2°, which poured into the lake. There flocks of sheep had recently drunk, and rows of cairns ran from the shore to guide antelopes into the traps in the ground. Now no game was seen except a single kiang. A mule died, and Abdul Kerim's yellow horse fell by the way. Only fourteen animals reached the camp this day, and of these my small white Ladaki was in the worst plight; he stumbled and fell, and I made a somersault over his head.

The day after, we made a short journey, left the lake and its barren shore behind us, and set up our tents amid good grass. The weather was fine; at one o'clock the temperature was 14°, and it felt as though spring had come. All the animals lay down to rest and warm themselves in the sun. Only my small Ladaki began to graze immediately; he would not die, but would follow me to the end. Wild asses and antelopes grazed on the steppe, and hares were plentiful. I was alarmed by a message that three men could be seen at some distance to the north, and the caravan bashi wished me to come and examine them through my field-glass. Apparently they were on the way to our camp. But I had plenty of time to put on my disguise. I watched them a long time, till at last they turned into three wild yaks which had been lengthened out by mirage. We had no need yet to trouble ourselves about men, but perhaps these yaks were forerunners.

Now I had ridden my small white horse for the last time. On February 8, when we continued our march east-south-east after a minimum temperature of – 18.9° he followed the caravan loose and unladen, and fell even without a rider. I rode instead a grey horse from Tikze. We made barely 5 miles, but yet the journey was full of events. On the other side on a low hill stood a Pantholops antelope, which did not run away though we were quite close. We soon noticed that it was held fast and was struggling to get free. The dogs rushed at it, but a couple of men hurried on to keep them off. The animal was

fast in a snare laid in an antelope track, where also we noticed fresh footprints of two men. We were evidently not far from winter hunters, who perhaps had already caught sight of us. Perhaps they had seen me, the only one riding in European dress. Perhaps it was too late to disguise myself. All my plans would then be spoiled, and all the labours of the winter lost.

But at any rate we had now fresh meat. Let us examine the ingenious trap in which the game is caught. Plates of rib bones of antelopes are firmly fixed in a ring of hard twisted vegetable fibres, which form a funnel with the points in a ditch. The antelope is enticed into the trap by a row of small cairns, and tramps about in the funnel, the plates giving way, but forming immovable impediments when he attempts to draw his hoofs out. But the snare must be held secure if it is to have the desired effect. A rope as thick as a finger is made fast in the bottom of the ditch, which is filled with water, and after freezing becomes as hard as stone. The free end of the rope forms a noose above the ring of fibres, which tightens when the animal first attempts to lift his leg and holds down the funnel of ribs. The more the poor animal jumps about, the faster is the hold of the twisted snare.

The victim was slain; the dogs ate their fill of the entrails, and the meat made ordinary loads for four men. Then we went on. At the mouth of a valley to the south were seen a sheepfold and two black specks we took for stones. Beyond a grass-grown mound we found a pool of fresh water, and we pitched the camp near it. It was not long before the Ladakis were sitting round a fire and roasting pieces of delicate, much-appreciated meat.

Now, when we were evidently in the neighbourhood of human beings, it was time for me to give directions to my people. All were summoned to my tent. I told them that we should succeed in crossing the forbidden land only by craftiness and cautiousness, and that I had made the great sacrifices which they had witnessed only to see regions where no Sahib had ever been. If our scheme were to be successful,

every man must do his duty and play his part well. Whenever Tibetans put the usual questions, whence we came and whither we were going, they should answer that we were all, without exception, Ladakis, in the service of a merchant named Gulam Razul, who had sent us to Chang-tang to find out how much wool could be bought from the nomads next summer. Abdul Kerim was our leader and chief, and had to manage our affairs. He was therefore given 100 rupees for expenses, and every evening when no one could spy upon us he was to render an account to me. I myself was one of his servants, a Mohammedan named — Abdurrahman, the caravan bashi suggested—but no; Hajji Baba sounded better to me. Accordingly, when we came among Tibetans, they should never forget and call me Sahib, but only Hajji Baba. All understood the matter and promised to do their best.

A little later, Lobsang came running up and declared that the two black stones were tents. We went out and examined them through the field-glass. Quite true; smoke rose from one of them, but neither men nor animals were visible I at once ordered Abdul Kerim, Abdul Rasak, and Kutus to go and pay for the antelope, buy anything they could, and obtain information. They soon came back again and asked if it would not be wiser to avoid the tents and march on eastwards, the more so that the inmates might be robbers. No; these men had seen us and might send a report to Rudok, and then we should be stopped. It was best, then, to enter into friendly relations with the men and lull them into security. "Bismillah," cried the three and took themselves off, while the others sat by the fire in lively conversation about the incidents of the day and the prospects of the future. It was now sixty-four days since we had left the last village in Ladak, while on the former journey we had been in solitude for eighty-one days.

After three hours my men returned. The two tents contained nine inmates—two grown-up men, two women, three girls, and two boys. The older man was named Purung Kungga, and he owned 150 sheep and 4 dogs, but no other

animals. During their journey from Yildan their tents and goods were carried by sheep. They had arrived two months before, and intended to stay half a month more. The day before they had just been to look at their antelope trap, when they were alarmed at the sight of the caravan. They took it for granted that only robbers could be travelling in this district, which lay outside the haunts of honest and honourable men. The antelope had, then, been not more than an hour in the trap. Abdul Kerim paid 3 rupees for it, 3 for a sheep, and 1 for milk and butter. We could get more milk early in the morning, but we should have to send for it, for the nomads dared not come to our tents. We might have kept the antelope without compensation, for we were wayfarers and had a right to take what we found. In answer to their inquiry who we were, Abdul Kerim repeated the yarn he had just learned. The country about camp 324 is called Riochung. In one of the tents lay the hides and meat of nine antelopes. The people lived almost exclusively on the game they caught in their snares.

So far we had been fortunate. With provisions for twenty-one days instead of for seventy-five, we had struggled up to the Karakorum instead of finding a passage to the east; we had been persecuted by raging storms, biting cold, and deep snow all the way, and yet we had lighted on the first men. They were like a rock in the ocean, and now again we were to venture over the raging waves. This day found us only a few miles up a gently sloping valley, filled with ice. Little Puppy was let loose and had to look after himself a bit. But he was soon tired, and lay down till Kunchuk fetched him.

February 10. The valley bottom is full of ice sheets, which we often cross after they have been strewn with sand. We wander through a labyrinth of clay hills. In an expansion to the left are seen three stone cabins and some *mani* heaps; here is the gold placer which Rawling calls Rungma-tok, and the hunters we saw yesterday Getsa-rung. The gold-diggers come hither only in summer. The camp to-day, No. 326, is in an excellent spot, with a sandy soil, plenty of fuel, and an

unfrozen brook. It is pleasant to listen to the purling water, a sign of approaching spring. East and south-east rises a wreath of lofty mountains, which we have to surmount. As long as the ground is flat and there is grass the animals do very well, but they cannot endure a high pass. My white Ladaki has picked up again, and the men are ordered to tend him carefully.

February 11. We ascend the valley and the snow becomes deeper again. In one place are seen fresh tracks of three men. We camp behind a cliff to get shelter from the wind, but first we have to cross the ice belt in the valley bottom, where a path has been recently sanded. It is evident that we shall soon fall in with men—perhaps on the march between the two camps. Therefore I put on my new Ladaki costume with a girdle round the waist. The white turban is kept ready at hand in case we meet Tibetans. The *chapkan* looks suspiciously clean, but Gulam undertakes to soil it with fat and soot. My soft leather vest is sacrificed and cut up for soles. After this camp Lobsang and Kutus were required to give me every evening lessons in Tibetan, and I arranged all the new words in a vocabulary, which afterwards grew to a considerable size. Thus we spent a couple of hours each day when all my literature was at an end. I especially practised the answers I was to give in case I, Hajji Baba, were subjected to cross-examination.

On the 12th we marched up through the snowdrifts in the valley, where small, graceful, elegant Goa antelopes were seen on two occasions. The camping-ground was so wretched that all the animals wandered back in the night to the former camp, and therefore the next day was lost, and we waited wearily. In my grey *chapkan* I am too conspicuous among the other ragamuffins, and whenever I have an opportunity I smear soot and butter on it and cut holes in it here and there. A continuation of such treatment will at length make it as disreputable as the others. I also try to leave off washing my face and hands, but do not succeed in looking as dirty as my men. With them the dirt seems to be engrained and never to be

removed, and they could grow potatoes under their nails. My desire was to become like them as soon as possible, that I might escape the notice of the Tibetans.

February 14. Temperature −22.9°. Again we are a few miles nearer our destination and a day nearer spring. Our progress is slow, but we must be glad that we can get along at all. Camp 329 is in the valley leading to the pass, which we have taken several days to reach. A mule is fatigued and is relieved of his load. Some grass is again found, and all the animals go out to graze, except my small Ladaki, which stands beside my tent with drooping head and icicles under his eyes. He has been weeping, knowing well that he will never be able to cross over the pass and that we shall leave him. I sit beside him for several hours, patting and stroking him, and trying to induce him to eat lumps of meal mixed with rice. He revives again and goes slowly after his comrades.

February 15. Temperature −22.5°. A hard, toilsome day. Through ice and snow among sharp detritus we march up the valley. My white horse leads the way of his own accord and I ride in the rear. We keep together for some time, and ascend step by step towards the troublesome pass. But first one and then another lags behind. Among them is my white horse. I stop and whisper in pure Swedish into his ear: "Do not lose courage; put out all your strength and climb the pass, and then you will go down in a few days to fine rich pasture." He raises his head, pricks up his ears, and gazes at me as I go on up to the pass with Kutus and Gulam. Only a couple of lively mules follow my horse and halt where he halts, at every twentieth step.

At last we came up to the flat pass, which attains to the considerable height of 18,553 feet. Here we waited a long time. The large black mule passed first over the snowy threshold of the pass and then the others, till nine baggage animals had gone by and my grey Tikze horse last. Abdul Kerim reported that four animals were thoroughly tired out. I ordered that they should be led step by step even till night if necessary, and he went down to them again. A little later

appeared Tubges and Abdullah carrying two loads. One of the four animals had already departed this life.

To the west-north-west, the direction from which we had come, the view was magnificent—a sea of wild, red, gigantic undulations, with snow crowning the summits and streaming down their sides. During the last days we had noticed schists, porphyry, red and grey granite. The country was absolutely barren, and we must try to reach the nearest grass in the descending valley, but it was full of snow, and the train moved slowly and wearily through the drifts. I went on foot like the rest; every man carried a load to help the animals. All were silent, and tramped and balanced themselves in the track marked by the leader. The valley contracted to a ditch, and where the first yak-moss grew we threw down our burdens. A sorry camp in the close dismal valley. The last animals stood tied together, and were fed with pulverized yak-dung and moss mixed with meal and rice.

At dusk the other men came up leading a mule. Three animals were gone, and one of them was my small white Ladaki horse He had struggled up to the very top of the pass, where I had sat watching for him in vain, and then had laid himself down to die. He had served me and carried me faithfully and patiently for a year and a half, and had never from the first been missing from the camping-ground, and now that the last of the veterans was gone I felt very lonely. During the whole journey he had never reached a higher spot than that whereon he died; on the very saddle of the pass his bones would be bleached by the winter storms and the summer sun. The caravan this evening was empty and forlorn, for I had lost a trusty friend. Now Brown Puppy was my consoler, for she had been with me from Srinagar, and her little whelp was the youngest and least anxious member of our struggling troop.

Two mules had crossed the pass but died in the valley. If another such pass lay in our way the caravan would perish. The loads were much too heavy for the surviving animals. A thorough weeding-out was necessary. My ulster and most of

my European clothes were burned. Felt mats, tools, kitchen utensils, and spare shoes for the horses were thrown away. My small Swedish bag was burned, and all the medicines except the quinine jar were sacrificed; my European toilet necessaries, including my razors, went the same way, and only a piece of soap was kept. All European articles that were not absolutely indispensable were cast into the fire. I tore out of Fröding's poems the leaves I did not know by heart, and left the rest at the camp. The remaining matches were distributed among the men; I kept myself twenty-four boxes, which must suffice until the time when we must use only flint and steel to preserve our incognito.

Cold and sad the night spread its wings over the silent valley where our lonely camp, a picture of desolation, was buried among black cliffs and white snowdrifts, while the stars came out above like lights burning round a bier.

While the lightened loads were being placed on the animals I started on foot followed by two men. One of them, Kutus, walked beside me, and I steadied myself by his shoulder as we floundered through the drifts. The wind blew furiously, and the snow danced in spirals and appeared as white clouds on all the crags and ridges. After a march of about 3 miles we encamped when we came to grass. Snow had to be melted in pots, for the animals had been long without drink. This process did not take so long now that only eleven animals were left.

With tottering steps we continued to the east-south-east on the 17th and 18th, sometimes along valleys, sometimes over open country, and always through deep tiring snow. Camp 333 was barely made ready when a terrible storm burst over us. The sky had been clear, and then all of a sudden the pure blue colour was wiped out by orange clouds of dust which swept up from the south-west. I was sitting in the lee of my tent when in an instant the contents of the brazier were carried away. A heap of wild asses' dung which the men had collected also flew away, and we saw the small round balls dancing up the slopes as though they were racing. A

herd of antelopes cantered past our camp, and their smooth coats shimmered like satin and velvet according as the hair was exposed to the wind and the light. Again our ears are filled with the din of the storm. I hurry inside, and hear from time to time a shout when some part of the men's tent threatens to give way, or the sound of iron against iron when the tent-pegs have to be driven in again, or a singing dying-away sound when my towel is seized by the blast and borne away towards the foot of the mountains. We might be on an unsound vessel with the sails flapping and beating in cracking strips, and the mountain spurs, which still peep obscurely from the mist, might be dangerous and threatening reefs, against which we are to be dashed in a moment. Grand and majestic is such a storm when it sweeps over the earth in unbridled fury.

CHAPTER LXI

THIRTY DAYS OF STORM

On February 19 we had good country for travelling, declining gently to the shore of the Lemchung-tso, which appeared in the distance. I travelled mostly on foot, as I could easily do, for the storm had abated, but, as usual, we were chilled through by the wind, though the temperature rose to 28° at one o'clock. At the foot of some hills in the south we perceived numbers of black spots, which we took for tame yaks. They soon resolved themselves, however, into whole troops of antelopes, which sped in light springs over the plain northwards. Now were often seen signs of the summer visits of the Gertse nomads. We had left Deasy's and Rawling's routes a couple of days behind us, and now found ourselves on the western margin of one of the largest blank spaces in the map of Tibet.

After a grey horse had perished in the night we had only ten animals left, or a fourth of the original caravan. They were fed in the morning with meal and spent tea-leaves in water, which they swallowed with avidity. Our store of provisions would last out barely a month.

We were 6 or 7 miles from the shore of the lake, and on arriving there we encamped close to a cave in which a millstone and a couple of yak hides had been left in the summer. Along the shore ran a path worn by the feet of men. We stayed here a day and sorted out the baggage again. All spare instruments, such as thermometers, measuring tape, eye-glasses, etc., as well as some European garments,

a couple of caps, bandages, portfolios, were sewed up, together with some stones, in a sack, and sunk in a hole in the ice, which covered the lake to a depth of nearly 3 feet. Now I had only three changes of underclothing left, one of which might be sacrificed at the next sorting out—we were like a balloon from which ballast is thrown out to keep it in the air till it has crossed a sea and has firm ground below it.

In the evening we hear a whole orchestra of roaring winds. The air hurls itself down like cascades from the mountains on to the camp, and cannot rush fast enough over the clear ice of the lake, where the moon produces bright silvery streaks on the surface, while the mountains show a dark outline to the north. Grazing and fuel are plentiful to-day, and therefore we are in high spirits. The men sing, sometimes softly like a swinging lullaby or rounded billows in a bay, sometimes in the wild and passionate style of Asiatics, and dance around the fire. But when the most violent gusts rush down, they pause, prepared to prevent the tent from falling over the fire. They seem to sing responses to the storm, and I am pleased with the performance, for it chases away thoughts of the long hours of solitude, and calls forth pleasant dreams and hopes of spring, warm winds, discoveries and adventures in Tibet. I wonder daily how this journey will end, but every day I am a step nearer to the answer.

On February 22 we left the little fresh-water lake on our left hand, while the Lemchung-tso proper extended its partly frozen surface to the right. In the middle the water was quite open and of a dark-green colour, and was lashed into vapour by the storm. To the east-south-east the country seemed favourable—an open plain, where no obstacle came in our way. In front of us were two grazing animals—perhaps yaks or wild asses. Gulam, who went in front, held up a field-glass and reported that they were horses. So we were near nomads again. We searched about in every direction but could perceive no tent. Had, perchance, the horses strayed away? However, they were not shy, but became very sprightly when they caught sight of us, galloped straight to the caravan, and

greeted every horse and mule individually. After this civility they followed us all the way, prancing and neighing. They were three-year-old colts which had never carried a saddle or a load—fat, fresh, and nimble-footed, very different from our last three horses. When we encamped they went off to the south and were lost to sight. The storm increased in violence, and our last iron spade and a kettle were carried away by the wind, but were afterwards recovered.

February 23. The thermometer sank to −19.8°. Our last ten animals made a short day's march along the same easy valley. I could perceive no trace of the "Snowy Range" of English maps in the prolongation of this valley. We observed a couple of tents in the mouth of a valley to the north, but we were now in no distress. I lived exclusively on tea, bread, and jam, of which there were still two pots left.

The storm continued next day also. We seldom covered more than 6 or 7 miles. In the past month we had travelled 220 miles, 30 more than in the previous month. During the evening and night the snow pelted on to our tents. I still had my warm comfortable bed, but at a pinch it would also go piecemeal into the fire. Everything that was discarded was burned or buried, lest, if it were left, it might arouse suspicions.

For another day's march we had the advantage of this fine longitudinal valley, which imperceptibly rises to a flat threshold, beyond which we passed a gold placer. The holes from which the auriferous sand is extracted are 3 to 16 feet in diameter, and little more than 3 feet deep. It is evident that some of them have been digged out last summer. A little farther down gold had been searched for some time ago. Folds, stone shelters for marksmen, and stone cairns were to be seen in several places.

Still lower down we came, on the following day, to a third placer, situated where the valley contracts to a trough. Here large sheepfolds and abundant tracks of men were found. The gold is washed out on flat stones in a flume 100 yards long. The valley afterwards contracts to a breadth of 5 yards, and the bottom is mostly filled with ice, here and there forming

ledges. These had to be levelled with axes and strewn with sand, and each animal was led and held up by men. We could not afford to let any one of them break his leg and be lost to us. Then the ice came to an end, the valley opened out, and we pitched our tents in an extensive flat. Towards the east the land was all favourable, and no "Snowy Range" stood in our way. We could see 25 miles ahead. Tubges shot five hares and we had a feast that evening. A pack of wolves howled round the camp at night.

February 27. A thousand wild asses were seen on the plain which sloped down gently to the east-south-east. They formed dark lines, sometimes large, sometimes small, sometimes spots like a rosary. Some herds galloped off to a point about two hundred yards in front of the caravan, where they stood and gazed and then dispersed, springing away in graceful movements. Perhaps they were here for a great spring congress, to decide questions relating to their territory and pastures. It is certain that, like the nomads, they migrate at fixed seasons, for they also are dependent on the occurrence of grass and its varying abundance at different heights and different times of the year.

Farther down the plain, beyond a small cliff, were five herds of kiangs, the nearest of which numbered 133 head. They came galloping almost up to us. Lobsang ran towards them. Then they set off in wild flight one after another, their hoofs thundering over the ground, made a wide curve behind us, and vanished in a dense cloud of dust, the hard beat of their hoofs being still audible. A strong puff of wind dispersed the cloud, and they came into sight again; they stood quaking with fear, and looked at us, pricked up their ears, dilated their nostrils, and sniffed the wind.

To the south of our route we perceived two tents among small scattered heights. Abdul Kerim and two men went off to them while we pitched camp 341. On their return they reported that the tents were the property of a certain Tsering Ngorpel from Gertse, who had come hither with his family for two months and was going back in a month. They were poor

people, and owned only 70 sheep and goats, 6 yaks, and 1 dog. The neighbourhood of camp 341 the man called Senes-yung-ringmo, and he said that if we marched south-eastwards we should almost daily meet with nomads from Gertse and Senkor, districts in the south which I had passed through in 1901. They were afraid of our men and would not let them enter the tents. Two fine sheep and a lump of butter were bought, and rescued us from starvation for a time. The hare meat was discarded and given to the dogs.

We made the two sheep carry themselves our newly-acquired store of meat to camp 342; we had no room for extra loads. We mounted slowly to a flat pass. Three tents stood in a side valley and some men came out to look at us, but we passed on without exchanging questions and answers. On February 29 the wind raged furiously all day long. Clouds swept ceaselessly over the country, and at one o'clock the temperature was 22.1°, quite low enough to chill a rider down to the bones and marrow.

In front of us lay a large flat hollow, in the midst of which two small lakes shone white with ice. We slowly approached the isthmus between them. A herd of antelopes took to flight and nearly fell over a lonely wild ass, which looked at them uneasily, but at the last moment they turned off in another direction as though they were afraid of him. On the left, in a deep trough running towards the lake, a flock of sheep was driven along by two shepherds. Wait one moment. Hand me the turban. Gulam wound it round my head, and then I went on foot like the rest. Along the shore a young man was driving six yaks. Abdul Kerim and Gulam went up to him while we set up the tents on the shore (15,200 feet).

After a while they returned with the yak-driver, a boy of fourteen in a large white skin hood. He was terribly frightened, and could with difficulty be persuaded to come to our tents; our intention was that he should guide two of our men to his dwelling. He called the lake Lumbur-ringmo. As my disguise was now complete, I went to look at the boy, who did not seem at all suspicious.

Lobsang and Tubges followed the boy to his tent, and after a long time returned with unwelcome news. Two Tibetans had rushed out of the tent, stopped them, and asked roughly what they wanted. They replied very quietly that they wished to buy food; but there was nothing of the kind for sale.

"But who are you?" an elderly man asked

"We are Ladakis in the service of a merchant, and we are on the way to Saka-dzong," they answered.

"No" the Tibetan exclaimed; "you lie. No merchant travels this way, least of all in winter; there is no trade in Chang-tang."

"We are not trading," Lobsang replied; "we are commissioned to inquire how much sheep's wool can be bought up next summer."

"Sheep's wool—in uninhabited districts! No; you are servants of a European, who keeps himself out of sight in one of your tents. Out with the truth, or it will be bad for you."

"Ask the boy here," returned Lobsang in his most innocent tone, "if he saw any European in our tent. We abhor Europeans as heartily as you. If you doubt us, you can come to our tents and see for yourself."

"No, thank you; we will not come to your tent," the old man answered, and disappeared with his people behind the black hangings.

Lobsang was very serious when he came back, and proposed that, if we had not already come to a standstill, we should in future set up our camp as far as possible from the nomads. I was alarmed, and I had a feeling that we should not advance much further into the forbidden land. It was also disappointing to be so openly suspected to be a European.

Now good advice was precious, for evidently the nomads would betray us to the nearest authorities. At the evening's lesson in Tibetan, which occupied some hours, I discussed the situation with Lobsang and Kutus. It was resolved that Abdul Kerim should go early in the morning to the tent, and if the nomads were still hostile we would try to lengthen our day's march so as to get out of the way of a probable summons to stop.

This time Lobsang met with a better reception, as he could present our chief and leader, whom the nomads correctly addressed as *bombo*. The old man introduced himself under the name of Sogbarong Tsering Tundup—Sogbarong is his home in the west, and this name is placed before his own much as Anders Persson i Storgården. The old man invited his guests into his tent, took a couple of sheep's trotters, cut them in pieces with an axe, threw them into the caldron, and offered some broth to Abdul Kerim, saying it was the only tea he had. In the tent were five antelopes cut up, a gun, a knife, and other articles. The old man did not this time express any suspicions of us, but related that a European with a large caravan had crossed the country to the east more than a year ago. He did not suspect, of course, that that same European was hiding in one of our tents. When the messengers came back they had a fine fat sheep and a can of milk with them.

This day, March 1, the wind was so strong that it was impossible to travel. My tent fell over and was held fast by the load of sand and stones on its folds. Not a trace of the surroundings was visible, and I should have obtained no notion of country on the route. At two o'clock Tsering Tundup and another Tibetan came to return the visit. They emerged from the mist only when they were close at hand, and a couple of men hastened to protect them from the dogs. The visit was a complete surprise, but there was nothing which could excite the least suspicion. My things were crammed into a sack, and I was disguised as usual; indeed, I had now no other clothing to put on. Even if they had come and looked into my tent there would have been no danger.

Our guests had capacious sheepskin coats drawn up above the belt so as to form the usual protruding bag where a large part of their property is stored. They wore hoods of sheepskin and looked like Samoyeds or Chukchis. They stood a while and chatted with our men in the wind, but I did not hear a word, though they were standing only 3 yards from the loop-hole in my tent through which I was watching them. After some hesitation, they went into Abdul Kerim's tent, and then

the yak question was discussed. They had only six yaks, which they required for their own journeys; but if we would buy sheep, they would let us have as many as twelve, and each sheep could easily carry a fifth part of a mule's load. The offer was accepted with pleasure, and the price was fixed at 38 rupees. Then they went off through the storm and I felt safe again.

The purchase was concluded on March 2, and the twelve sheep stood with their heads together in the shelter of the men's tent. To start on our travels was impossible, for we could not have kept our legs in such a storm. We therefore remained here another day, and the men had full occupation in sewing sacks for the sheep, arranging and weighing the loads. I was worse off, for I had nothing to do and nothing to read, but I sat and wrote Tibetan notes and entered new words in my lexicon. Then I heard a hasty step coming towards my tent; it was Kunchuk bringing fire. A rustle, an oath, all the contents are swept out of the shovel, and the man has to crawl back to the camp-fire for more embers. So the day passes and the storm roars, and every one is weary and listless.

During these stormy days our animals lay for the most part quietly in a hollow where they were sheltered from the wind. The storm kept them from grazing, and they were much enfeebled by fasting. A white mule, therefore, remained behind at Lumbur-ringmo-tso when we moved off south-eastwards on March 3 with 3 horses, 6 mules, and 12 sheep, delighted that we had passed this critical point with a whole skin. Freshwater springs formed a number of picturesque ice volcanoes on the shore of the small lake. Before we encamped behind a projecting cliff, we met three large flocks of sheep with their shepherds. On such occasions I always went on foot. The new sheep all carried burdens, and gave invaluable help to our tired animals. They were tied up every night between the tents that they might be safe from wolves, and the yellow dog from Gartok proved an excellent guard. They bleated piteously the first evening, probably distressed at leaving their native country. I was sorry for

them, for they had been treated as cruelly as Uncle Tom, but in time they became quite accustomed to their new way of life.

Violent storms prevailed all day and all the following day, on which we passed two black tents. At every camp we had to take the greatest care that no pieces of paper, match-boxes, candle ends, or cigarette stumps were left lying about, for we might be sure that the Tibetans dwelling near would come and search about after we had left the spot. Our route took us over a low pass (16,030 feet). The rocks comprised weathered schists, quartzite, and granite—the last only in detached blocks. On the other side we followed a deeply excavated valley opening out on to a plain, and we were just setting up our tent by a projecting rock when two large black dogs came running towards us barking. Nomads, therefore, were encamping in the neighbourhood, and we must be on our guard. Abdul Kerim, who always showed himself prudent and tactful in delicate negotiations, went off to a tent which stood on the other side of the rock and was inhabited by four Senkor nomads who owned 400 sheep. The chief of them was named Shgoge, and sold us three sheep at 3 rupees a head, some butter and milk. He said that the country here, around camp 345, was called Pankur, and that we were three days' journey from the encampment of the Gertse Pun, or the chief of Gertse. With him, however, we had nothing to do. It was to our interest to avoid as much as possible officials of all kinds, not to approach Gertse or Senkor in the west too closely, and not too near my route of 1906 to the east. We must steer our way through many pitfalls. Just in this district we crossed the meridian of 84° E., and my plan was to travel due south from the Tong-tso right across the large blank space. The continual storms which had done us so much harm, were so far advantageous to us that they enabled us to cross the great wastes without being much noticed. This day all was hazy from the dust, and our neighbours' sheep, which passed my tent in long columns with shepherds and dogs, made a very curious spectacle in the dense mist.

March 5. Abdul Kerim obtained two more sheep, and now we had seventeen to help the mules and horses. Our intention was to increase our sheep caravan by degrees, and make ourselves independent of the other animals. We must also have a spare horse for Abdul Kerim, for he was our master, and it was incongruous that he should go on foot while I, a simple caravan man, rode. This day we had the storm at our back, and we travelled 8½ miles over the same even, excellent ground which had made progress easier since we left Lemchung-tso. We encamped at a sheepfold and enjoyed the feeling that there were no neighbours to spy on us. A sheep was slaughtered; only the worst were sacrificed for food, and were to be replaced by new ones when an opportunity presented itself.

CHAPTER LXII

ADVENTURES OF OURSELVES AND PUPPY IN NAGRONG

On March 6 we made another hop towards our destination. It is difficult to travel over the high plateaus of Tibet in winter, and we could not march more than four hours a day. The morning was clear, but we had not gone far beyond a small lake, with its mantle of ice covered with driftsand and dust, before the storm increased in violence and made me reel in the saddle. The clouds of dust became thicker, the sandspouts were dark reddish-brown at the base, and the gusts tore up furrows in the ground like ploughshares, while frequently spiral forms were seen which could only be produced by cyclonic whirlwinds. On the left hand shimmered a lake, its surface partly white with gypsum and salt, partly streaked brown with driftsand, and with open water only in two places; it was the ghost of a lake which was doomed to disappear.

Two built-up fireplaces served us capitally for a camping-ground on the shore where the grazing was good. On the eastern side of the lake was a brick-red ridge of medium height, which I wished to paint in order to record the effective tones in the dust mist. I waited for the others with Kutus and Gulam, and we had scarcely induced a fire to burn before the storm rose at noon to a hurricane. Now everything vanished—lake, ridge, all except the nearest tufts of grass. The fire was fenced in with stones and clods lest it should be blown away, sand and minute pebbles beat against my dry skin coat, and I had to cover all my face, for the skin smarted

as though lashed by whipcord, if it were exposed for a second to the wind. Fortunately the others made their way to us. Every man had to lend a hand to raise my tent. At length Gulam came crawling backwards and yelled into my ear that the tent was ready. With straddling legs and all my muscles on the stretch I fought my way to it, and was glad to catch hold of a tent rope before I was blown down. At last I was under cover and could recover my breath. The tent cloth was puffed out like a balloon, and threatened every moment to burst with a report. The sand and rubbish beat upon it, producing a deafening noise. It was as dark as at twilight, and the wind roared and whined through the grass. The men tried to set up their own tent, but when the wind had overturned it twice they let it lie, weighting it with the baggage that it might not fly away. Five Ladakis lay in the lee of my tent rolled up like hedgehogs, and I let them come in, where they sat silent and motionless for a couple of hours. The others had crept under the ruins of their unfortunate tent. Puppy and Little Puppy lay in a corner and kept each other warm. However, the temperature was 35.8°, and we had not such warmth for three months. A long and dismal evening! It was with difficulty I got a piece of bread, a cup of tea, and a piece of dried meat. We were deaf and dizzy when at length we sought repose under our rugs, while the storm continued to rage outside.

I awoke to hear the same old music, and to go out to my horse was like plunging into icy-cold water. Neither the sky nor the horizon was visible, and the mountains were dim shadows. With Kutus and Gulam I led the way, following a path trodden by men. Dark, chill, and doleful was the land of eternal twilight, frost, and the wicked demons of the air. After a march of eight miles we halted at the edge of a belt of ice, a frozen stream in several branches, which ran to the south-west. The gale flew over the clear sheet of ice, and the red dust was swept over it like flames. With the assistance of Kutus I slid over to the other side, and in the shelter of the opening of a small valley we made the usual fire.

The caravan came to the edge of the ice. It was impossible to sand a path, for the grains would have been swept away. The animals were led across singly, each helped over by several men. For all that a mule fell and gave a fearful wrench to one of its hind legs, and with great difficulty it was helped up to the camp. All of us had grey distorted faces, our eyes ran, full of sand and dust. My lips bled and my teeth were black. March is the worst month, but we had never experienced such bad weather before. What is the use of looking forward to spring when the days are darker as time goes on?

The injured mule had evidently dislocated its leg. It was thrown down and a rope was fastened round its hoof and the end was pulled by the men. When it was at full stretch Lobsang hit the rope hard with a tent-pole in order to set the dislocated joint in place again, but I could not perceive that the operation had any effect. No; the mule was lost to us just when we could ill afford to lose one of our best animals.

And it was lost indeed, for on the morning of March 8 it could not take a step. It was sad to pass the death sentence, and a pitiful sight when the fresh warm blood spurted out in powerful jets and moistened the barren soil. It lay quiet and patiently, and after a few convulsions expired, and was left in solitude when we moved on over the dreary waste.

But before starting I had ascended a hill and looked around. Which was more expedient—to travel north-east or south-west? Both directions lay out of our course. I decided for the south-west, and hastened down to my tent, where Gulam served up breakfast. Brown Puppy and Little Puppy gave me their company to get their share. Little Puppy had grown so much that he could do what he liked with his mother. When I gave her a piece of meat the young one flew upon her and took it away. I had to hold Little Puppy that his mother might eat in peace. When we set out, Puppy and the yellow dog remained behind with the slaughtered mule, finding a convenient point of departure in an open wound in the soft muscles of the neck. There they stood gorging when we started along the ice-belt of the stream towards the south-west.

With my usual followers I rode in advance. The suffocating, blinding, deafening storm was right in our faces. Gulam walked in front, stopped, looked through the field-glass and gave me the sign to dismount. The stream swept round the foot of a cliff in front of us.

"What is it?" I asked Gulam when we came up to him.

"A large stone house with a wall and a couple of smaller huts. They are not visible at this moment because of the mist, but they lie close to the foot of the mountain."

"Yes; now they can be seen. It is strange that no dogs rush at us."

"What is to be done? Shall we turn back? Surely a chieftain lives here, and he will come and search us down to the skin."

"No; it is too late, for we must have been seen already."

How I regretted that we had not travelled to the north-east! But we must put on a good face in our unlucky situation. We passed the village at a distance of 100 yards, and halted in the shelter of the dark porphyry crag crowned by two *chhortens* and a *mani*. At least it was pleasant to get shelter for a moment. It was like taking refuge in a gateway when it pours. All around was dead and dreary; no one was seen; only a couple of jackdaws croaked, and a hare sped out of its form so near us that we could have caught it with the hand if we had been alert. Kutus and Gulam went out to gather fuel. I searched the suspicious neighbourhood with the field-glass, where treachery seemed to lurk behind every projection. It cleared a little towards the south-east, enough for me to detect a black tent of unusual size about 200 yards off. Four strings with prayer-streamers were stretched out from a high pole. I had been in hopes that we should get past the first dwellings, as no dogs had shown themselves, but I had never heard of an uninhabited tent. And the outward appearance of this tent indicated the presence of an important chief. Thanks to the mist, we had stumbled right on to his camp, and he would not be caught napping by poor strolling Ladakis.

Gulam had been to the large house, the yard door of which

stood open, and had found in a shed a large quantity of fuel of a kind of shrub the Tibetans call *ombo*. So we waited and waited, expecting to see the caravan emerge from the mist, but when nothing was heard of it Kutus went out to search. It had wandered quite out of its course, and had made a long circuit round the house and tent, for the leaders were convinced that I wished to slip by unnoticed. A horse had fallen, and now we had only two left, and 5 mules out of 40 animals.

The three tents were set up in a line close together, and Abdul Kerim went with Kunchuk to the large tent. We saw through the mist that a man came out to meet them, and that all three went into the tent, and then we waited with our hearts in our mouths. The men returned at dusk with good news. The tent was inhabited by a lonely old Amchi-lama, *i.e.* a monk-doctor, who at the same time looked after the souls of the Nagrong nomads, determined from astrological books the lucky and unlucky days for baptisms and other affairs, and assisted people with the same remedies when they were sick, died, and finally were buried He was from Sera in Lhasa, and had lived three years in Nagrong. The tent was a movable temple, furnished inside with altars, burning butter lamps, and votive bowls, where the hermit performed service —we heard him beating a temple drum at midnight. It belonged, as well as the large house, to the Gertse Pun Bombo, or the chief of the Gertse district, who a few days before had gone off a day's journey to the east, with his flocks, children, and all, but was soon expected back in consequence of a dispute between two of his subjects. Perhaps, after all, it was well we travelled south-west instead of north-east, for we might have fallen into the jaws of the Gertse Pun himself. This potentate comes to Nagrong in late summer and takes up his abode in the stone house, while a hundred nomad tents are set up around and a fair is held.

The old lama had no servants, but every third day a man came to bring him wood. He must find it dull in the long winter evenings, when he hears the storm roaring outside, and silence reigns within around the gods who answer his prayers

and the rolls of his drum with a smile of reconciliation. But probably he is a philosopher and has no fear of the dangers of the night. In his tent lay several sacks full of *tsamba*, barley, rice, and butter, but he had no authority to sell anything without the permission of the Gertse Pun. Instead, he pointed out where the tent of the Pun's brother-in-law stood, where all kinds of prime goods could be bought.

We therefore decided to remain where we were over March 9, and Abdul Kerim with three attendants sought out the brother-in-law, met with a friendly reception, and bought five sheep and two goats, besides two sheep-loads of rice and as much barley, and also a bag of tobacco, which the men had long wanted. All day long I was a prisoner in my tent; my period of freedom was over. And when the evening came and enveloped the dreary Nagrong valley in its shadows, I could think of nothing else but my old trusty comrade, the oldest of all that had been with me in Tibet, brown Puppy. In the company of the yellow dog she had remained in the morning with the mule which had dislocated its leg, and I had seen nothing of her since. We had hoped, however, that she would find us again, as she had so often done before, but now we were convinced that she had lost our trail, and, desperate and crazy with anxiety, was seeking for us over hill and dale, only to wander farther and farther from the right direction. It was useless to send men after her, and it was not advisable to divide our small party at such a critical time. The dogs had remained a long time tearing at the mule's neck, and when at last they were satiated they had started to follow us and had lost our track in the terrible wind and sand clouds. If they once crossed over ice they would never find our track again. Now thoughts of my old tent companion worried me more than anything else. Only that very morning she had lain on her felt rug in the usual corner, and we had breakfasted together. Where was she? what was she doing at this moment? Day and night she would run barking and whining over desolate Chang-tang with her nose to the ground, searching for our track till her paws were torn and painful. What would she

do when night came down with its dreadful darkness and its prowling wolves? Were the dogs keeping together, or were they seeking us along different paths, having lost each other? Would Puppy some time find a home with friendly nomads and lead a comfortable life again, or would she come to want and be tied outside a poor tent, and, pining in hopeless sorrow, remember her past life, which, from the time she lapped milk in my room at Srinagar, had been spent in my caravan? I was never to receive an answer to these questions, for the parts she and the yellow dog played in our romance were ended. For the future her life would shape itself differently, but I was never to gain any knowledge of the remaining chapters of her existence. I lay awake at night thinking of her misfortune, and looked every morning to see if perchance she had come back in the night and was lying in her usual corner, and I fancied I heard her trotting outside my tent in the dusk, or thought I could distinguish the profile of a lonely half-starved dog on a mound or crag with its nose up and howling at the storm. For some time I suffered from a delusion, imagining that a shade, the restless soul, the invisible ghost of a dog followed me wherever I went. I felt the presence of an invisible dog which followed me into my tent, and among the Tibetans, and always whined and pleaded for help, and I was worried that I could give no help or consolation to my lost, wandering friend. But soon we had other things to think of, other dogs became my friends, and we were daily entangled in a skein of troubles which must lead to a crisis, and the cares of the past paled before the gravity of the moment.

March 10. Such a day as this is interesting to look back on, but it was hard and cruel as long as it lasted. Before six o'clock I was awakened with the disquieting information that two Tibetans were approaching our tents. I made haste to dress myself and paint my face and hands black with a thin coating. Meanwhile the strangers arrived and were invited into Abdul Kerim's tent, where I heard them talking pleasantly about sheep and money—so they were not spies; our time had not yet come. One of the guests was the brother-in-law, the

other a neighbour of his, who, when he heard what a good price we paid for sheep, said he was ready to sell us four he had brought with him, as well as a lively goat. Abdul Kerim had received a general order to buy all the sheep he could procure, so he took them. The goat was, as has been said, a lively beast, and he ran off at once and could not be caught again.

The two Tibetans went off to the lama's tent to drink tea, but the critical time was not yet over, for probably they would return to see us start. Therefore, while the tents were still standing, I set out with Tubges, Little Kunchuk, and "Snoring Kunchuk," as we called Sonam Kunchuk on account of his terrible timber-sawing propensities, when they drove our thirty-one sheep down the valley. As we went off the Tibetans came out and watched us, but did not suspect anything wrong. To escape detection I had hurriedly turned to sheep-driving, but I soon found that I had no natural aptitude for this occupation, so invigorating, but so trying to the patience. I fancied I imitated my Ladakis as closely as possible, whistled and shouted in the same way, and threw out my arms when a sheep left the crowd, but the animals showed me not the least obedience, but went where they liked when I was near. After an hour's walk in the teeth of the wind I had had enough, and while the other shepherds went on with the sheep, Kunchuk and I stayed in a cranny out of sight of the lama's tent, while I could look over all the valley.

At length the other men came with Abdul Kerim riding at their head. Our coats and turbans were of the same colour, so that any Tibetans who happened to be watching could not tell if it were Abdul Kerim or I that was riding. I now took my horse and went on in front with my usual companions. At eleven o'clock the storm rose to a furious pitch and dashed in our faces. Driftsand swept over the ground in dense masses; we were nearly suffocated, and we seemed to stand still while the country moved past us at a giddy pace. We crossed the valley in order to follow its western flank. The clouds of dust obscured the sun; nothing could be seen beyond a

distance of 20 yards; chaos surrounded us. We stopped to get our breath and lest we should miss the others, but as soon as they appeared like phantoms in the mist we set off again. I have experienced many sandstorms in Takla-makan and the Lob-nor desert, but hardly any so bad as this was. In Turkestan one simply encamps when a storm comes on, but what is the use of encamping to await the end of a storm which lasts thirty days? We strayed among small dunes, and, though the valley fell in the direction we were travelling, we seemed as though we were mounting to a lofty pass in consequence of the pressure of the storm. The driftsand rattled against my dry, hard coat, which, from the constant friction, became heavily charged with electricity. About every other minute there was a discharge, and I felt uncomfortable and often painful prickings, especially in the soles of the feet, the hands, and knees. At every such discharge the horse pulled up and became nervous. At last, when my grey Tikze horse refused to go farther, and we had quite lost sight of the others, and could not see where we were going, we came to a halt and huddled together with our backs to the wind. The electrical discharges continued even now, but were weaker. If I placed the tip of a finger near Gulam's or Kutus' hand a small electric spark was felt and seen, and both of us felt the shock. The men were exceedingly astonished, and hoped it was not witchcraft.

We sat waiting for three hours, and were prepared for an uncomfortable night. But Kutus came upon the other men just when they were giving up all attempt to find us before night. We encamped among the dunes, and before long all articles which were set out in my tent vanished under a thick layer of sand.

On the morning of the 11th the storm had somewhat abated; and, wearied and stiff after our experiences of the previous night, we continued our journey southwards and encamped at a deserted sheepfold. By nine o'clock compact sandspouts twisted slowly over the plain like spectres, so the storm was again at its usual height. We had *tsamba* for only

one day, but it did not count for much as long as we had such a good supply of meat. We were glad to get out of reach of the Gertse Pun; in this drifting sand it was impossible to find our trail—yes, even for our own dogs. Little Puppy did not miss his mother, but felt very important at being sole master on the ground, and barked at our sober sheep. It was, however, a serious matter for us that we were deprived of our night-watch in districts where we had most need of them. We must try to procure fresh dogs as soon as possible.

On March the 12th we marched the usual weary 6½ miles to the east-south-east through a fine, broad, longitudinal valley, and pitched our camp in a hollow full of rubbish. Our three tents were now always placed close together, so that, if any stranger came unexpectedly to my tent, I could crawl into Abdul Kerim's without being seen from outside. My Ladak *chapkan* began to assume a more satisfactory colour, but we still did all we could to defile it and make it sooty and greasy. Little Puppy lent me his assistance by biting and tearing the sleeves so that they hung in rags. It would not be long before I had the appearance of a regular ruffian.

It snowed heavily all night, and in the morning the snow lay so deep, and the country was so thickly covered, that we thought it best to remain stationary. We were still farther removed from Brown Puppy, and it was vain for her to seek our trail. Perhaps it was providential that both she and the white horse were lost before they could betray us. Tibetans have wonderfully sharp eyes for animals, and recognize them again when they have seen them only once. Now the danger was over, for all the veterans had gone. Perhaps Puppy sacrificed herself that I might be successful! All the same, I seemed to see her wandering disconsolate and distressed about the desolate wastes in the north.

CHAPTER LXIII

THROUGH THE HIGHLANDS OF BONGBA

WHEN I awake to another day of uncertain fortune and adventures life seems gloomy and solitary, and the longer the time the more I long for an end of my difficulties. When Gulam awoke me on the 14th, he complained that Abdul Kerim did not keep the watch I had given him in order; either the watch or the caravan leader was at fault, but he believed it was the latter, for the watch could not be blamed if it were wound up only every other day. Gulam affirmed that when Abdul Kerim was asked what o'clock it was, he always answered seven, whatever time it might be in the twenty-four hours.

The thermometer fell to − 11° in the night, but the day was fine. The wind blew as usual, but the sun came out and we thought of spring again. Three shepherds were taking some hundreds of sheep to the west, which had been driven off from their pasturage by the recent snow and were looking for uncovered land. We were only a day's journey from the Tong-tso (14,800 feet), they said, and the Tong-tso was the point from which we were to start southwards to traverse unknown country. If I succeeded in crossing it only by a single route, all the troubles of the past winter would not have been in vain. The shepherds' information was correct, for the next day we bivouacked on the western shore of the Tong-tso, which we found exactly at the place where the immortal pundit, Nain Sing, inserted it on his map. To the south-east towered the huge massive Sha-kangsham, along the northern foot of which I had ridden in 1901.

Now we had to find a convenient pass over the mountain which barred our way to the south. A gap was seen to the south-east, and we directed our steps towards it. On our right, two tents stood at the foot of a hill, and Abdul Kerim was sent to them while we encamped in a deep narrow ravine, at the bottom of which we found a large quantity of wind-driven kiang dung and dry tufts of grass. On his return, our good leader reported that he was rudely received by two men, named Nakchu Tundup and Nakchu Hlundup, who came from the district Nakchu, three days' journey distant to the south, and had a wife in common. They first asked how many we were and how many guns we had, just as though they wished to know whether they and their neighbours might venture to attack us. They then said that they had seen a man riding at the head of our party, while all the rest, Abdul Kerim included, went on foot, and that it was not hard to guess that the mounted man was a European. When Abdul Kerim replied that no Europeans travel in winter, for they are too much afraid of the cold, and that we were only wool-buyers from Ladak, the Tibetans shook their heads and answered that they had never heard of Ladakis travelling in this country in winter. But, nevertheless, Abdul succeeded in gaining their confidence, and when he had paid double the market price for two yaks and six sheep, the Tibetans forgot their suspicions, all for the sake of filthy lucre. The purchase was to be completed the following morning. Then the new animals were fetched, and their carrying power was a welcome assistance to our animals. Fortunately, the nomads had in general the greatest respect for our tents. It was important for us to make liberal bargains with men who at first had been hostile to us. On the other hand, they often abstained from betraying us, even if they had suspicions, for if it were known that they had been well paid, the nearest chief would confiscate their receipts and would also punish the unfortunate men who had dared to traffic with suspected individuals.

During the day's march I rode in front as usual, with my two companions on foot. A tent lay concealed behind a cliff,

and we did not notice it until we were some way past it, and then it was too late to dismount. Two fellows were outside and looked after us, and if they compared notes with their neighbours they would have good cause for suspicion. At our camp that day we had a visit from an old man and two young people, who had their tent near and came to see what kind of men we were They said that they were very poor, and begged for some coppers. We were on the border of the district Bongba-changma, which contains 300 tents, and, like the whole province of Bongba, is subject to the governor Karma Puntso, whose tent stood at a distance of six days' journey to the south. He was a man of twenty-five years of age, lived in a large tent, and had been in office only a year, since his father died. It was assuring to know that he could have no experience of Europeans and their crafty ways. After the strangers had received a couple of *tengas* from Abdul Kerim, they went home again in the rays of the evening sun, delighted to find that we were not robbers.

Then the temperature fell to $-16°$; the winter was remarkably trying, but the day, March 18, was still fine, and I travelled all the way on foot, driving the sheep while we were passing several tents. Among them was that of our old man of the day before, and he proved to be a man of property, who sold us various much-needed articles of food. On the way Tubges shot seven partridges, whereupon two Tibetans came forward and protested, saying that only Europeans shot partridges. Abdul Kerim assured them that he preferred partridges to mutton. Again there was talk of Karma Puntso. Perhaps it would be better to choose another way. No; then the governor would be still more suspicious. We encamped on the northern side of a small pass, where we had no troublesome neighbours.

March 19. Breakfast, a delicate partridge and a cup of tea, was just over when it was announced that three Tibetans were coming up to our tents. But they stopped at a respectful distance, and Abdul Kerim went up to them. My tent was opened in this direction, but was closed again just in time.

The Tibetans' errand was to ask if we had any medicine suitable for a man who had a pain in the foot. In reality, their object was to spy upon us when we set out, for they stayed all the time and looked about. After my hands and face had been coloured black, I stole by the secret passage into Abdul Kerim's tent, while Kutus and Gulam crawled by the same way into mine to pack up. Then I went with Lobsang and Kutus, and drove the sheep up the track leading to the pass (16,135 feet). We had not gone far when Abdul Kerim came riding on my horse and made frantic gestures to us to stop. A Tibetan horseman, followed by a big dog, would meet us in a few moments on the path. We therefore took a roundabout way among hillocks, while the caravan encountered the Tibetan. In this way we escaped the danger. Soon came Kunchuk and Sedik, leading the dog with a rope on either side—a savage brute, which barked till he foamed at the mouth, and tried to bite those who were taking him away from his master. He was of the species called *takkar*, and Takkar was his name. He reminded me of a St. Bernard; he was coal black, with a white patch on the chest and neck, and was as savage as a wolf. They had bought him for 2 rupees.

Moreover, Abdul Kerim had also bought the rider's horse for 86 rupees, and he came jogging cheerfully after us as we rode down from the summit of the pass to a longitudinal valley abounding in tents and herds of sheep and yaks, and at two spots were seen mounted men, who looked uncomfortably like a levy. The new horse was eleven years old, the owner said, and if he passed well over his fifteenth year, he would live to thirty—but we did not want him so long. He was a new member of our troop and excited general interest, and Takkar became quieter when he saw an old friend and comrade in misfortune.

At the camp we had to be careful, for nomads dwelt near and shepherds wandered with their flocks on the slopes around. To prevent Takkar from running away he was tied by the neck to a tent pole, an operation by no means easy. He was tied

CROSSING THE KANGSHAM RIVER.

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fast with ropes, his legs were fettered, and a felt mat was thrown over him, on which four men sat while the others made him fast to the pole. Immediately he was let loose he rushed at those nearest him, but was held back by the pole. It was a sin to drag him from home against his will; he was another Uncle Tom who suffered for our sake, but I hoped that we should soon understand each other. To console him in his captivity he was given the blood and entrails of the slaughtered sheep.

We crossed another small pass (19,537 feet) on the 20th, and the insignificant lake Shar-tso, where a fine spring bubbles up out of the ground by the shore. From a couple of tents to the west we bought tea, butter, and *tsamba* sufficient for several days, and heard again about Karma Puntso. This time it was said that he lived three days to the west, and we hoped to slip past without any disturbance. The country about camp 359 is called Luma-shar, and we stayed on the northern bank of the large river Kangsham-tsangpo, which comes from the northern flank of Sha-kangsham, the huge massive which I left to the south of my route in 1901, and which showed us a magnificent view of its western side. The mountain lay about a couple of days' journey to the south-east.

The next day we were to cross the river, an exceedingly unpleasant business; for though there had been 32 degrees of frost in the night the ice, except close to the bank, would not bear. Abdul made an attempt with his horse, but the animal came down on his nose in the middle of the river. Then Lobsang took off his boots and went across the river barefooted, and came back again to help in conducting our pack animals gently and firmly across. To get the sheep over was the worst difficulty; they had to be pushed and pulled by the horns, one at a time. Almost all the men of the caravan got a refreshing bath in the stream.

On the other side we ascended to a small pass where there was a splendid view over the ridge, which seemed to run west-south-west from Sha-kangsham and which barred our way to the south. Abdul Kerim, Kunchuk, and Sedik

went with an exhausted mule to a few tents standing to the right of our route, with the object of bartering the worn-out beast for a couple of sheep, but the nomads said they would not take it as a gift. Instead, our men bought rice, sour milk, butter, salt, and a sheep, so that we were provided for some days. From the camp also Abdul Kerim took a long walk to some tents in the neighbourhood. Now poor Abdul Kerim had to do penance for his sins, and if he had erred in taking too little barley from Ladak, he made up for it by his conduct on this adventurous journey.

From camp 360 the highest peak of Sha-kangsham lay south, 73° E.

Takkar is still irreconcilable, and heartily detests Kunchuk, who bought him. But he also barks at us as soon as we show ourselves outside the tents. On the march he is resigned as long as he is near our new horse, but at other times he is savage. The only one that dares go near him is Little Puppy, who teases and sports with him and bites his ears. Takkar treats Little Puppy with supreme contempt, and only when the young one presumes to snatch his new uncle's food he growls angrily, but then Little Puppy pricks up his ears, puts his head on one side, and looks at him. He little thought that the new dog could have bitten off his head like a chicken's if he had wished. In reality, Takkar was glad to have a playfellow in his captivity, though at first he held himself aloof to maintain his dignity.

The next morning Lobsang and Tubges went back to the nomads' tent and returned with three more sheep, a lump of butter, and a bag of tobacco. Their appetites were wonderful to behold. The others had left for them half a pot of tea mixed with butter, thick and red. One cup disappeared after another, and they emptied the pot to the last drop. Then they took some meat out, which they ate up like wild beasts. What was left they stuffed into their waistbelts, to have it handy in case they were hungry before we reached the next camp.

We continued on our way to the south, passing on our left

hand an open plain which extended up to the foot of the skirts of Sha-kangsham. We passed tents and flocks at one or two places, and encamped on a hill of loose material beside a spring. The nomads around had nothing to sell, but gave Abdul Kerim much valuable information. On such occasions Kunchuk used to sit and secretly note down all the geographical names. Among other details we now heard that if we held on our journey to the south for seven days we should fall in with a rich merchant from Lhasa, named Tsongpun Tashi, who was wont to take up his quarters in winter in the heart of the Bongba province to sell tea to the nomads. We might be certain that if we came into the neighbourhood of his camp we should again be in a critical situation.

Now Lobsang and two weather-beaten Ladakis complained that they slept badly, because it was too warm in the tent. The former wore a set of underclothes, and above only a garment of thin woollen material. In this costume he had travelled all the way from Drugub, and slept in 72 degrees of frost with only a couple of sacks over him, for he had sold his skin coat to one of his comrades at the commencement of the journey. Only a Tibetan can survive such an experience.

On March 23 we struggled up to the Chaklam-la, which we also heard called Amchen-la. The path up to it is steep, and we moved exceedingly slowly up the ascent. The sheep and the two yaks beat us hollow. From the last tent the path was visible all the way up to the pass, so I was obliged to travel on foot, and I might have collapsed from palpitation of the heart and loss of breath if Lobsang had not gone behind and pushed me. The lives of two mules had been ebbing away during the previous days, so the animals were left where nomads could take possession of them. A black horse was also giving in, and the newly bought one had to take over his load. My grey horse was no longer worth much. Chaklam-la, with its 17,339 feet, was a heavy trial to us, and I was not delighted with the view which unrolled itself to the south—a labyrinth of mountains, where it was plain to see that the ranges all stretched from east to west. From the pass there is a steep

descent to the river Sangchen-chu, which flows westwards. We encamped on its bank. Now Takkar was becoming resigned to his fate. He was certainly annoyed at being tied to the pole, but he found that he got good and plentiful food and that we were kind to him. He barked only at Kunchuk, whom he could never forgive.

When we broke up our camp on March 24, we hesitated whether we should make for the south-west or south-east, for high mountains rose to the south. If we went south-westwards we should come too near to Karma Puntso, and so we chose the south-easterly route. We had first to cross the ice of the river, 130 yards broad, where a path was sanded. The sheep had to be dragged over one by one by the horns, and the yaks would not venture on the ice till they saw that it bore the horses and mules. Gulam went first on foot, and had the usual order to give a sign if he saw a tent or shepherds. We had not gone far when he stretched out his left hand, which meant that I must dismount and go on foot while Abdul Kerim rode my horse. It was only a shepherd with his flock. As soon as the danger was past I exchanged places with the caravan leader.

A little farther on I found that I had lost my cigarette case, which also contained some unmounted family portraits and one or two pieces of sticking-plaster. It would be terrible if a Tibetan found it. Only a European could own such a thing. Lobsang and Kutus went back and searched along the track while I lay and waited on a bank. They found the case, and each received a cigarette as a reward, and we sat and smoked while Abdul Kerim with Kunchuk and Tubges went down to a tent, where there were only women, and bought some provisions. At the camp in the evening snow fell, and at night the thermometer sank to zero. Now we had only 2 sheep left, and we must try to increase our flock, or, still better, buy a dozen horses. In this region, and in Bongba generally, it was difficult to buy sheep. Everywhere the nomads complained that their flocks had been decimated by the cold, wind, and snow, and the pasturage was unusually

poor, because the rains had failed at the end of the preceding summer. Sheep-breeding is their means of subsistence, and if they lose their flocks they are impoverished and can do nothing but wander about begging from more fortunate people. They have therefore a decided objection to diminish their flocks by artificial means, as we may say; the flocks must fluctuate, increasing in good times and diminishing in bad, but they must not be reduced by sale. Therefore they often refuse to sell even at double the proper price. Still harder was it to buy horses in Bongba.

In the night our animals wandered back to the former camp. While Lobsang and Kutus went after them most of the day slipped by, and therefore we remained at camp 363. Kunchuk and Tubges spied a tent in a valley to the south, where they bought rice, barley, *tsamba*, milk, and *chura*—a kind of cheese, so that we had food for several days. Thus we got our livelihood in small portions, bit by bit and from tent to tent. Our own flock had now shrunk to 21 head, all carrying burdens.

A solitary wild-goose flew screaming over our camp. Had he got lost, or was he a scout sent out to see if the ice were broken up on the lakes to the north? Doubtless he would soon return to his tribe and make his report. It seemed to me that he had been despatched too soon.

From February 24 to March 24 we had traversed only 190 miles, owing to the cutting storm, loss of animals, and now at length the difficult country. We now seldom made a day's march of as much as 7 miles.

It is most irritating that a tent, like a sentinel-box or a spying eye, always stands at the northern foot of a pass, so that I have to walk all the way. This day also, when we crept up to the Sanchen-la, a small shelter stood on the saddle, 17,572 feet high. Southwards there were still more mountains. At a distance of 20 to 25 miles north, 60° E., rose the highest peak of Sha-kangsham, a fine sight in the beautiful weather, when not a cloud obstructed the view. Five Ovis Ammons careered in nimble and elastic springs over the

heights, and small agile Goa antelopes leaped along the southern slope, where we scrambled down among detritus. The Pantholops antelope is not seen in this region.

Close to where we encamped at Nema-tok wás a tent, and the inmates sold us a sheep's load of rice. An old man, whom my fellows called familiarly *ava* or father, came to look at our black horse which we wished to sell, as it could evidently not travel much farther. But the old man said he would not give a rap for the horse. He informed us that in nine days nomads from all quarters would repair to the place where Karma Puntso dwelt, to buy tea and pay their taxes to the Government. Tsongpun Tashi was a powerful and influential man, he said. We drew near to this potentate with a feeling of uneasiness and growing respect. He enjoys peculiar privileges from the Devashung. He sells tea to the nomads on credit. When they sell their sheep's wool in summer at the *tasam* they pay their debts to him in *tengas* or in goods. Tsongpun Tashi makes a good profit on these transactions, and therefore it is to his interest to stand well with the Devashung. If he, who must have the reputation of being more intelligent and sensible than the simple nomads, were to let us pass by with impunity, he would have to answer for it to the Devashung and would lose his privileges. We were therefore evidently coming to a most critical moment.

Nothing venture, nothing have! If I would explore the blank space in the heart of which I now found myself, I must expose myself to various annoyances and run great risks. For a moderately intelligent man it could be no particular pleasure to go on foot through desolate wastes like a vagabond, and drive a flock of refractory sheep. I was already thoroughly weary of this work, for I had no talent or training to perform it properly. I had to paint myself black every morning like a negro, and I sat with a brush before the looking-glass, smearing my face three times over to produce an evenly dark complexion. My eyes were concealed with a pair of large round Tibetan spectacles with my own polished glasses fixed inside. This time I was much more carefully disguised than

in 1901, when I tried to get through to Lhasa as a Mongol, but was held fast in the strong claws of Kamba Bombo. My turban was too white, so it was dipped in a dye of boiled butter and ashes, and became at once quite shabby. My soft leather boots were in holes, so that the toes came out. It was well that I ran no risk of meeting acquaintances from Stockholm or London.

This journey was painful and trying to the nerves. Day and night I lived in the greatest anxiety lest I should be discovered and ignominiously unmasked. The farther we advanced southwards the more I was troubled by this apprehension. Should we succeed, or should we be forced back when we had traversed only half the distance across the blank space? Should I never cross the Trans-Himalaya again? At every stage our watchfulness and cautiousness increased, and also the tension of our nerves. I must always be on my guard and never hold a cigarette in my hand when we were on the march. My map sheets and compass I thrust into my bosom to be near at hand. When I collected a rock specimen, took a bearing with the compass, or made a drawing near a tent, Lobsang had to screen me, and he became astonishingly adept at this game. The sun I could observe only when we were quite sure that no Tibetan could see the instrument. Sometimes I sat and drew a panorama through a peephole in the tent cloth. The sheep were my refuge, and with them I set out first, and had not to take part in the packing and loading, and I was spared from watching the animals at night, as in 1901. In both cases I was practically a prisoner in my tent, where the evening hours seemed very long. Nothing is so trying and irritating to the mind as this anxiety in which I lived, travelling in disguise, and expecting any moment to come to a crisis in my fate.

CHAPTER LXIV

TSONGPUN TASHI

MARCH 27. Nearly -4° in the night—still winter. But at one o'clock the temperature rose to $46\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$—spring was coming.

An old man sold us four sheep in the morning, and then prowled about our tents. He could not at all understand why we had come hither, especially at this season, but Abdul Kerim told him that when we left Tok-jalung the most severe cold was over. This was a new story we had invented, because it was more probable than the former, and would pass better in the southern parts of the country.

Here, also, stood the usual tent with a view up to the pass, and I was obliged to go on foot up to the summit of the Ladung-la with its 17,395 feet. But here the view was encouraging; we had level or declining ground before us for four days. The descent from the pass to the south was precipitous, and we stumbled and slid through the rubbish, which rattled down behind us, and I had the satisfaction of ruining my boots and clothes more than ever. The valley turned off to the right, south-west, and in the Janglung district, where we encamped, a young shepherd informed us that we should come to Tsongpun Tashi's tent next day.

Numerous springs bubbled up from the valley bottom and formed a little clear brook full of fish between grassy swards. Here some of us halted and used Kutus' girdle as a net. At the first haul we caught 18 fish, and we did not cease till we had 160—not large ones, but quite sufficient to feed all thirteen of us. It was amusing to see Little Puppy as he

stood watching attentively and regarding the sprawling fishes, barking and shaking his head. He had never in his life seen running water before, and must have supposed that he could walk upon it as safely as on clear ice. Quite unsuspiciously he jumped down from the grass, where the brook was 2 feet deep, and entirely disappeared under the water. When he had, with much difficulty, struggled up again, he was much amazed and disconcerted, and prowled about growling with displeasure at the cold bath. After that he kept far away from the deceitful brook.

March 28. Now we saw that we could trust Takkar, so we let him loose. He did not run away, but was in the best of tempers, and flew like an arrow over the slopes, enjoying his freedom, and played with Little Puppy, who became furious when the huge brute came racing down on him with playful leaps, so that he rolled over and over on the ground.

Abdul Kerim was to go on the new horse with the Ladaki saddle, accompanied by two men, to look out for Tsongpun Tashi. He had plenty of money to buy anything he might find, and in reply to searching questions he was to say that we had orders from Gulam Razul to meet one of his caravans in Raga-tasam, which in about ten days was to leave Lhasa, and then accompany it to Ladak.

I had to ride my grey horse barebacked, but I had not got far before we passed two tents, where four Tibetans came out to look at us. Two of our men went and talked to them while the rest of us followed the brook through the valley. A little further and we had to be careful again, for there were three more tents and two large flocks, the owner of which possessed 3000 sheep. Sheepfolds, old camping-places, and *manis* were all around, for we were on a great highway, and therefore I kept close to the sheep, and whistled and shouted at them. At the mouth of a side valley, on the left, stood a large white tent with blue borders, which was said to belong to the chief of the district, the Gova Chykying. A man came out of the tent, hurried after us, and asked whence we came and whither we were going. Two women came out of a tent inhabited by

beggars, and put the same questions. A mile or so farther we were out of sight of tents, and I jumped on my grey horse, but I could not ride far, for more tents appeared farther down the valley. We encamped by the side of the brook in the Kung-sherya country, where the valley is very broad and open, and tents are seen in many directions. From one of these, which stood below ours, a man came and made inquiries. He said that one of the tents, which looked large and important, belonged to Takyung Lama, abbot of Mendong-gompa, a monastery three days' journey to the south-east. Now we were in a warm corner, with the district chief, a high lama, and Tsongpun Tashi as near neighbours, and the Governor of the great province of Bongba not far off. It would be a marvel if we succeeded in making our way out of this wasp's nest. One thing was certain, that we must make off next morning, before news of our arrival had spread about.

After we had waited several hours Abdul Kerim came. We could see at a long distance that he had bought a horse, which was laden with sacks and bags containing rice, barley, butter, and *tsamba*. Tsongpun Tashi proved to be an old man of a poverty-stricken and mean appearance, but his large tent was full of goods, sacks, and packets of tea, and his movable shop was very well stocked. Naturally he was much surprised at the visit, but he swallowed the story that Abdul Kerim dished up for him. He had even given him the names of all the places where we ought to camp on the way to Saka-dzong and Raga-tasam, and advised us to be well on our guard in a district he called Bupgo-lathit, where there were always robbers. He related that a band of robbers had, a few weeks before, attacked and plundered Targyaling-gompa, the monastery where we had met with such a hostile reception in June of the preceding year. Forty men with horses and guns had been levied to chase the band, but Tsongpun Tashi said that these forty men were little better than robbers themselves, and that we ought to inquire about them, so as to avoid them as they returned. Abdul Kerim promised Tsongpun Tashi to barter our sick black horse for some provisions, but Abdul

Kerim did not know that Abdullah had already exchanged the horse at the beggars' tent for two sheep and a goat. There the faithful horse would see happy days again when the grass grew up.

After Abdul Kerim had drunk tea he went on to visit the Gova Chykying, who came out of his tent and said that Takyung Lama had that very day imposed on him eight days' *yangguk*—that means that he must not transact any kind of business, but must devote himself entirely, on account of his sins, to contemplation in his own house. That was fine for us; the Gova was reduced to a negligible quantity.

March 29. Temperature 13° in the night, and 55° at seven o'clock—this is spring. Welcome mild salubrious breezes, come to thaw our frozen joints!

Early in the morning came a couple of our men tramping along with another dog, light yellow, dirty, and loathsome. He was inhospitably received by Takkar, who immediately gave him a sharp pinch in the neck, and seemed to think that the new member of the caravan was quite superfluous as long as he kept watch himself.

Far in the north a solitary Tibetan appeared, and approached our camp. I was sitting at breakfast, and was hoping that we should soon leave this dangerous place. I went out and looked through the field-glass; the stranger was making straight for our tents. Soon Abdul Kerim came and said that it was Tsongpun Tashi himself. He stopped at some distance and called to us to tie up our dogs, for Takkar had rushed at the old man, who defended himself with stones. The men were purposely slow in fastening up the dogs, in order to give me time to put the interior of my tent in order. On such occasions my note-books and instruments were crammed into a rice sack, which always stood ready. There was no other furniture, for we had burned all European articles and boxes long before.

Meanwhile, Abdul Kerim conducted Tsongpun Tashi into his tent, which stood close against mine, and I listened to their conversation at a distance of little more than a yard. By

degrees the talk became, to say the least of it, lively. Tsongpun Tashi raised his voice more and more, and Abdul Kerim was evidently in a serious dilemma.

"Did you not promise to give me the black horse in exchange for butter? Bring the horse immediately. If you do not keep your word, I will detain the whole pack of you here. We do not let men that break their word escape in Bongba. I thought yesterday that you were honest men, but now I see what you are up to. Now I shall begin by searching your tents."

With that he got up as angry as a wasp and went out. But Gulam, who was always alert and never lost a word of a conversation, had let Takkar loose again. As soon as Tsongpun Tashi showed himself at the tent door the dog flew at him again. He backed, and Abdul seized the opportunity to call out in a gruff voice: "Kutus, take Hajji Baba with you and go and look for the lost horse."

"What horse is that?" asked Tsongpun.

"It is one of our horses which has run away up the mountain, and we cannot set out till we have found him."

"What colour is he?" asked Tsongpun, with uncomfortable inquisitiveness.

"Grey," replied Abdul Kerim, who had difficulty in concealing his uneasiness, for it was he who had pledged the black steed without knowing whether it was still in our possession.

"Very well, I shall stay here till you have found the grey horse."

During the minute this conversation lasted Tsongpun Tashi had walked towards the opening of my tent, when Kutus came running up from the other side, seized me by the collar, and whispered "Come." We hurried off to a crag on the north-east, and so just escaped the clutches of Tsongpun.

"What man is that?" the old man asked, pointing at me, as I was making off with clumsy waddling steps.

"Hajji Baba, one of my servants," answered Abdul Kerim, without moving a muscle.

We did not look round as we went off to the point, and

were glad when at length we were hidden by a projecting rock. Then we scrambled up a fissure whence we could see all around. Here we lay a weary time with our hearts in our mouths, while Tsongpun Tashi waited for the runaway horse, which had not run away at all, for all our animals stood ready laden before our tents. But he must have lost patience. After Gaffar had gone to the tent to try and get back the black horse, but met with a refusal, for the horse had been fed with barley, and was getting on splendidly, Tsongpun Tashi seemed to make in that direction himself, accompanied by Gaffar. But he changed his mind, for he turned back half-way, and soon we saw him going to the fine tent of the soul-doctor, which stood about 300 yards farther down the valley. He was attended by one of our men, who helped him to carry the sacks in which the goods acquired the previous day were packed.

We remained quiet in our hiding-place of much-weathered green schist, full of quartz veins, from which we could peep out without being seen. We were supposed to be looking for the lost horse. But now the caravan was ready, and began to move down the valley past the abbot's tent. Tsongpun Tashi's errand had been to take farewell of the prelate, who was setting out this day for Mendong-gompa, absolutely unknown in all the maps in the world, and his yaks stood tethered and surrounded by a troop of servants. Abdul Kerim was shrewd enough to send no messenger after us, but leave us to take care of ourselves. And so we did when we had had enough of the green schist—we could not lie still till doomsday. But we had to pass the abbot's tent, and there sat Tsongpun Tashi, unless he were among the men outside. We sneaked on. Kutus walked next the tent to screen me. My disguise was perfect, and I had a black face. We passed with some trepidation quite close to the tent; two savage dogs rushed at us and we threw stones at them, thereby deranging our order of march and making a change of front. Confounded dogs! We had passed the tent, and, so far, had done well. But if Tsongpun Tashi noticed us—and he could scarcely fail

to do so, for the dogs barked so furiously—he would certainly wonder in which direction the grey horse had made off. If he had no suspicion of us he must be, beyond comparison, the greatest ass that I had ever fallen in with.

We made haste and soon overtook the others, and were lost among them. The valley sloped down—a fortunate thing for me, as I had to travel on foot where so many pitfalls surrounded me on all sides. Abdul Kerim rode grandly on my horse at the head of the party. On the left were a white-and-blue and a black tent with twenty yaks. Two men hurried up to us, and Abdul Kerim met and spoke to them. We marched along the ice-belt of the brook, and passed five more tents, and, at all, the men came out to look at us. I walked with the sheep farther from the tents than the caravan. We passed twenty tents that day; it was a dangerous stretch of country, and it was strange that we came through safely.

A woman, carrying a load of wool on her back, overtook us. She was so bold as to join herself to the caravan and ask to be allowed to put her wool on one of the yaks. Never have I so heartily wished a woman at the devil. Abdul Rasak took the woman in hand and offered to carry half her load to her tent, and so they jogged along the road far ahead, and freed us from her suspicious company.

We took it for granted that she was a spy. When we encamped below a sheepfold, there she was again, established herself inside the fold, lighted a fire and fetched water. She must drink tea before she went on homewards, she said; but fortunately she toddled off before dusk.

I sat in the setting sun and noted down the varied incidents of the day. I sat in the opening of my tent enjoying the soothing rustle of the spring, when what should I see but Takkar himself, who came up to me anxiously and humbly, made the most expressive gestures, put his head on one side and began to paw my arm. I looked at him and he looked at me, and at last we understood each other.

"I could not know," he said, "that you were nice men when you tied me by the neck to this horrible tent pole. I

thought that you would tease and torment and starve me, and throw stones and dirt at me, as the Tibetans have done ever since I can remember. But I see that you are well disposed towards me, and give me two good meals of mutton every day. I know that you, in spite of your rags, are a bombo-chimbo, and that Abdul Kerim is only a servant. Be at ease, I will not let any one come near your tent; I will watch over you at night, I will never betray you, I will follow you everywhere; you may trust in me. But now come and play with me a little; take away this useless tent pole, and let us be no longer strangers."

His shrewd brown eyes showed plainly that this was what he meant to say, word for word. I took his shaggy head in my arms and squeezed it. Then he jumped up on me and began to dance and yelp with joy, and enticed me out of my tent. Then I took hold of him again, untied the knots, and released him from his pole, to the great astonishment of my men, who were sitting in the open around a fire. No one had ever ventured so near to Takkar, except Little Puppy, and without the slightest jealousy the little cub joined in the game, which henceforth whiled away daily a couple of hours of my weary captivity.

CHAPTER LXV

BUPTSANG-TSANGPO, ONE OF THE LARGEST RIVERS OF THE HEART OF TIBET

It was with a feeling of relief that we broke up our camp on March 30, after we had succeeded in extricating ourselves from the net which had so nearly held us fast in its meshes. Through here runs the so-called Serpun-lam, or gold-inspectors' road, which extends through the interior of Tibet from Lhasa to Tok-jalung, and is one of the greatest highroads of the country. We did not yet feel quite safe, but we had heard some assuring news: Karma Puntso had taken a journey of several days northwards to a place in Chang-tang where he owned large flocks of sheep. Most of the nomads in Bongba had sent their sheep to the north, where the grazing was much better. This was of great advantage to us, for now only women, old men, and children remained in the tents of Bongba, while most of the men were following the sheep. It was part of the trial of my patience that I could not have the slightest dealings with Tibetans, for I should have betrayed myself at once by my defective utterance of the language. I never talked with them, but pulled the strings of my marionettes from my place of concealment.

The wild geese had now commenced their migrations, and we constantly heard their cries above our tents. On March 30 we found an excellent path along the river in which we had caught fish just pelow Ladung-la. The country was very open and flat, and we had passed at some distance from twelve tents. Near the last we pitched camp 368, and bought a black horse.

We had now four horses, of which one was a veteran from Ladak; now I rode the first horse we had bought—a brown one. The last three mules and the two yaks from the Tsong-tso were in good condition. When we encamped near natives, Takkar was tied up outside the entrance to my tent to keep off inquisitive visitors. He had been bred and reared among Tibetans, and had never seen any other people in his life till lately, and yet now he became mad with rage if he saw a Tibetan only at a distance. I had often to pay various sums in rupees to those of his two-legged fellow-countrymen whose unprotected legs he had bitten, and he was never contented without a slight effusion of blood.

We followed the river south-south-westwards for another day's journey to camp 369, where some poor nomads were encamping by a sheet of snow. Sha-kangsham's summit came into sight again, this time to the north, 30° E., rising like a gigantic beacon above the mountains. Five days' journey to the west-north-west was pointed out the salt lake, Tabie-tsaka, the position of which I had sought in vain to ascertain from the *tasam*. In the afternoon when I sat outside to draw a panorama, nomads were strolling and peering about, so that I had to post watchmen. In the evening all around was pitch-dark: there was no moon, only dense clouds. Our animals had disappeared, and as there was good reason to fear wolves and horse-stealers, eight men were sent out to look for them. They had revolvers, and fired a few shots to let any possible disturbers of the peace know that we were armed. The animals would not freeze, for the temperature fell in the night only to 18°, and in the morning they had come back again all right. The only one missing was the greyish-yellow dog; thinking, perhaps, that he had fallen into bad company, he had gnawed through his rope and run home in the night to his miserable tent.

Now the path runs south-south-west up to the little easy pass Satsot-la (15,932 feet), in red porphyry and with a way-mark. In the wide valley in front of us lies the lake Chunit-tso, and on its farther side rises a red mountain of regular form. We

pass several *manis*, and on the right hand a miniature lake called Chabuk-tso, where Tubges shot two wild geese. The honorary huntsman often supplied me with game; he was called by his comrades simply Shyok, after his home, just as we call one of our acquaintances Jönköping or Falsterbo.

We crossed a great road running to the north-west; hundreds of yaks had recently passed—no doubt a salt caravan on the way to Tabie-tsaka. Then we passed a circular wall, where a solitary man came out and looked at us, but retired behind the wall when he found that we would have nothing to do with him. A fine *mani* decorated with horns stood on a terrace, and just below it we halted for the night by a sheet of ice produced by springs. We had scarcely set up the tents when a caravan of several hundred sheep, laden with salt, came along from the north-west. Only two armed guides were with it; they had been to Tabie-tsaka, and were now going home to Yangchut-tanga, twenty days' journey to the south-east. In the same direction 400 yaks were grazing, which were said to belong to the Gova of the district. In the evening we had a visit from a traveller who was going home to his tent farther south. He promised to sell us three sheep in the morning. Would he keep his word?

Yes, certainly; he met us with the sheep next day as we were passing along the western shore of the Chunit-tso (15,574 feet) southwards. At the northern extremity of the lake a warm sulphurous spring burst forth. We were told that if a man drinks of it he becomes ill, but if he mixes the water with some from an adjacent cold spring he is cured of any complaint he may suffer from. Sick sheep and goats are dipped in the warm water and become well again at once. The spring is holy, and a *mani* heap is set up near it. The lake is slightly salt and frozen. Two small brooks enter it from the mountains on the west; a third brook, Lungnak-bupchu, formed a large sheet of ice, and in the mouth of its valley stood a couple of tents, and their dogs came down on us like a whirlwind, but received such a thrashing from Takkar that they showed themselves no more that evening.

April 3. We left the southern end of the lake behind us

and ascended a small valley leading up to the low pass Nima-lung-la, near which we encamped in a barren spot between granite crags. An eagle-owl sat in a cleft and at twilight uttered its shrill piercing cry. Lobsang said that this bird was thought much of in Tibet, because it warns honest men of thieves and robbers. When the eagle-owls sit and scream, robbers are certain to be in the neighbourhood.

On April 4 we had only half an hour's march to the threshold of the Nima-lung-la (16,017 feet), from which there is a magnificent view over the Trans-Himalaya—a series of dark rocks with black, snow-crowned peaks. Between us and the range extended a wide, perfectly level plain, full of pools, marshes, and rivulets. At one of them sat two Tibetans cutting up a yak which had died. They confirmed the information we had received before, that we were now in the district Bongba-kemar, a day's journey from Bongba-kebyang, and that we must follow the river Buptsang-tsangpo for several days upwards to reach Saka-dzong by the pass Samye-la. I had still a very dim and indistinct notion of the geographical configuration of this region. Was the range in front of us to the south a continuation of Nien-chen-tang-la, which I had crossed at the Sela-la, Chang-la-Pod-la, and Angden-la; or was it another range disconnected from the former? During the following days we should obtain an answer to this question. Should we be successful, and be able to complete this exceedingly important meridional traverse through an unknown part of Tibet? It would be more than provoking to be stopped just at the northern foot of the Trans-Himalaya.

Camp 374 was pitched below the opening of a valley where there were two tents. The nomads warned us against the water in the pools of the plain: our horses would lose their hair if they drank of it. "Snoring" Kunchuk complained of toothache, but was cured at once by two resolute comrades. The operation was performed with pincers properly intended for horse-shoe nails. To get at the tooth better, they put a stone in the patient's mouth. "Do not kill me," he shrieked when the tooth jumped out.

On April 5 we travelled altogether 10¼ miles to the south. The country was perfectly barren, and the ground was entirely covered with red porphyry detritus. A small spring surrounded by grass seemed to us quite an oasis, and there we encamped near a sheepfold and a *mani* heap.

Another day's march and we came to the Buptsang-tsangpo, "the deeply excavated river," and followed it to the south. The river is divided into several arms, and already contained a deal of water, though for the most part it was frozen. This valley is about 3 miles broad and has a very gentle slope. The locality where we encamped after passing fourteen tents was called Monlam-gongma (15,820 feet). Hence the river was said to flow five days' journey to the north-north-west and pour into a large lake, called the Tarok-tso. We might have attempted to make an excursion in that direction, but it was more important to complete the meridional line while the country was still open to us. Two huge snowy peaks which the nomads here, as on the *tasam*, called Lunpo-gangri, or "the great ice mountain," where said to lie to the right of the route we ought to follow to Saka-dzong. This information was exceedingly puzzling, and I saw that Lunpo-gangri with the summits triangulated by Ryder and Wood could not be a prolongation of the mighty range I had crossed by three passes, and which, farther east, bears the name Nien-chen-tang-la.

After a vain attempt to get rid of our enfeebled yaks, we continued up the great river along its right or eastern bank terrace.. A south-westerly storm which commenced some days before still continued. In the Amchung country (camp 376) we had a neighbour called Kamba Dramdul, who could not give much information, but what he said was of deep interest. we had still some days' journey to the Samye-la—all up the Buptsang-tsangpo valley, with *gangris* or snowy heights on both the right and left sides. On the pass we should be quite close to the peaks of Lunpo-gangri. I already suspected that the great range we had on our left—that is, towards the east—was a continuation of Nien-chen-tang-la, while Lunpo-gangri

was a quite independent chain without the least connection with the former.

The eastern range increased in magnitude on the following day's march, and among its dark ramifications rose some rather flat summits capped with eternal snow. We kept for the most part to the top of the terrace on the right bank, which was 50 to 65 feet above the river, and fell steeply to the even valley bottom where the stream meandered. Here the valley was about 2 miles broad. The ice mantle of the river became wider and thicker the higher we mounted, but the rise was very gradual. From camp 377 the culminating peak of Lunpo-gangri lay south, 23° E. Every day's journey we accomplished without adventures strengthened our position. The nomads must think: If these men travel right through the whole of Bongba without being stopped, they cannot be impostors.

On April 10 we travelled 8½ miles up the Buptsang-tsangpo, and we were astonished to find so voluminous a river up on the isolated plateau country. On its banks ducks and geese cackled in large numbers. Tubges shot several of them; it was a sin to disturb their dreams of spring and love. No human being was seen this day. I had a feeling of repose when we could see no black tents, and for the sake of peace I would readily abstain from sour milk. The view to the south-south-east was magnificent; the peaks of Lunpo-gangri stood out against the pure blue sky in dazzling white, with shades of light blue indicating ice. On the east also of our route appeared a whole world of mountains. Most unexpectedly the summits of Lunpo-gangri have a much grander and more imposing appearance from the northern side, towards the plateau country, than from the south side, the valley of the Brahmaputra, most probably because on the southern side they are too near. Up in the north we saw them at all distances, and for several days we had them right in front of us.

In the night of April 11 the temperature sank to −1.7°, and on the preceding nights to 3.7°, 13.5°, and 17.2°. The cold increased as we mounted higher. We came to an expansion in the valley where three glacier streams unite to form the

Buptsang-tsangpo, just as in the case of the Brahmaputra, and also on the northern flank of one of the world's mightiest mountain systems. Our camp 379 (16,112 feet) was pitched close to the river in Bupyung-ring. The eastern headwater comes partly from the Samye-la, partly from mountains adjoining on the south-west. The middle one descends from a massive called Yallak-mallak, and the western one from Chomo-gangri; south-east of this mountain is Lunpo-gangri, which is drained to the sea, both from its northern and its southern flank.

Bupyung-ring is one of the finest and most beautiful regions I have seen in Tibet. The flat wide valley, surrounded by mountains with ice and snow, is clothed with abundant grass and traversed by numerous water-courses. Everywhere are seen traces of camping-places. At the time we passed through only a few tent villages remained, but the valley is full of life in summer when the nomads come down from the north. When the melting of the snows properly sets in during summer, and afterwards in the rainy season, the Buptsang-tsangpo swells up so tremendously that the river cannot be crossed for three months, and communication between the banks is interrupted. From its source to its outlet in the Tarok-tso the river is probably nearly 100 miles long, and is possibly the largest river in Tibet which does not flow to the sea. The only rivers that can vie with it are the Sachu-tsangpo, which flows into the Zilling-tso, and the Soma-tsangpo, which falls into the Teri-nam-tso. The Sachu-tsangpo was far larger than the Buptsang when I crossed it in the rainy season in 1901. But the Buptsang is also a large river in spring, and in the rainy season must swell as much as the Sachu. The Buptsang-tsangpo has hitherto been unknown to Europeans, but we find the Tarok-tso on D'Anville's map, and a river entering the lake from the south, which no doubt is identical with the Buptsang-tsangpo. The Jesuits who resided in Pekin two hundred years ago, and were ordered by the Emperor Kang Hi to compile a map of the whole Chinese Empire, procured information even about this remote region from Chinese and Tibetan sources.

During the past days our two yaks had become so wearied and footsore that we had to get rid of them at any price. We therefore stayed a day in Bupyung and bartered them for nine sheep, which took over the loads of the yaks. Now we had again thirty-one sheep and some goats.

On the 13th we came to the foot of the mountain where commenced the actual steep ascent to the pass itself. Here were four tents inhabited exclusively by women and children. The men had gone a couple of days before to Gova Tsepten's tent. It is incumbent on this chief to collect a certain number of men and yaks, which for about three months are posted on the *tasam* ready to transport goods on behalf of the Devashung without compensation. This is a kind of *corvée* which is exacted not only all along the road between Lhasa and Ladak, but on all other highroads in Tibet. Naturally this injudicious system is a great annoyance to the nomads, who have to leave their flocks in the meantime to the care of women and children. If any one wishes to escape this compulsory service he must supply a substitute, pay him, and furnish him with yaks and provisions. The year before, when we travelled with hired horses from Shigatse, the poor nomads served us, but we always paid them honourably and gave them handsome gratuities as well.

After a night temperature of −0.8° we rode up to the pass on the 14th, over and between hills and across the brook which brings its tribute from the Samye-la to the Buptsang-tsangpo. Solid rock could not be found, but all the detritus and boulders were of grey granite; seldom was a piece of porphyry noticed. The usual observations were made on the pass, and the boiling-point thermometer was read off. The view of Lunpo-gangri was grander than ever, now that its peaks were quite near. The distinctly marked valley of the Buptsang-tsangpo disappeared in the distance to the north-north-west, while to the south-east nothing could be seen but a flat saddle, whence I concluded that we were not yet on the actual water-parting pass. We had not followed the track of the caravan far, before we saw a brook coming from the south-east, which

also belonged to the Buptsang-tsangpo. On its bank, where we also halted, was encamped a caravan of 8 men and 350 yaks, which was carrying salt to Saka-dzong, six days' march farther. The men could not understand why we, merchants from Ladak, chose such a way, and asked how we found it out. They were treated to the usual story about the wool-trade in summer, and they regretted that they could not serve us with their yaks, as they were called out for Government transport on the great highroads. Now we wondered whether they would let the Governor of Saka-dzong know that they had met with a party of Ladakis on byways, and if this news would injure us. Perhaps, after all, it would be best to avoid Saka-dzong altogether.

On April 15 it was our chief desire to get in advance of the yak caravan. Before they had begun to load up their animals I started off with the sheep, and came in good time to the summit of the Samye-la, with its streamer-decked poles. Though we were all the way in sight of the yak-men's camp, I must, at any cost, determine the height of the pass, and the distance was so great that they could not see what we were doing. After boiling the thermometer, whence we obtained a height of 18,133 feet, I also drew a panorama. To the south and south-east was a world of mountains belonging to the Lunpo-gangri range, which lay to the south, and to Nien-chen-tang-la on the north. We were therefore standing on the actual watershed between two gigantic ranges, which are both members of the Trans-Himalayan family. And this pass, the Samye-la, occupies the highest and most important rank from a hydrographic and orographical point of view that any pass in Asia can lay claim to, for it is a divide between the isolated drainage area of the plateau on the north and the boundless ocean on the south. It ranks, then, with the Sela-la, Chang-la-Pod-la, and Angden-la, and is much more important than the Tseti-lachen-la, which is only a watershed between the Sutlej and the Indus, and than the Jukti-la, which parts the waters between the two arms of the Indus. At the Samye-la I attained my chief desire, to cross the Trans-Himalaya between

the Tseti-lachen-la and the Angden-la, and gain another point on the immense boundary line on the north of the basins of the great Indian rivers, and I succeeded in proving the unbroken continuance of the Trans-Himalaya for 118 miles west of Angden-la. A most extraordinarily interesting discovery also was that the Angden-la and the Samye-la, though of exactly the same value as watersheds, do not lie on the same chain. The Angden-la is situated on the western prolongation of the chain which stands on the southern shore of Tengrinor and is known by the name of Nien-chen-tang-la, but the Samye-la lies in a longitudinal valley between this chain and Lunpo-gangri. Accordingly, I could strike out once and for all the continuous mountain range which Hodgson and Saunders constructed at their writing-table, and represented as running north of the upper Brahmaputra. Here also I considered what name I should give to the colossal mountain system which runs in the north parallel to the Himalayas. The name Lunpo-gangri had at least as much claim as Nien-chen-tang-la, but both were unsuitable, as they only denoted certain ranges in a whole system, and therefore had only local significance. Then it came to me like a flash—Trans-Himalaya is the name which I will attach to this gigantic mountain system.

While I sat and pondered over the great idea which had come to me this day without any merit of my own, I was recalled to the business of the moment by Lobsang, who informed me that the yaks were moving in a black line up to the pass. Then we got up and went on foot down the slopes bestrewn with troublesome rubbish and granite boulders. Soon trickling rivulets collected into a small brook. I regarded with pleasure this little stream leaping among the stones, and listened to its purling song. It was the old melody, and we had recently heard it from the brooks of the Buptsang-tsangpo. And yet I seemed to hear an undertone of another kind, a sound in the water which suggested a new aim. The Buptsang-tsangpo is doomed to final annihilation in the Tarok-tso and Tabie-tsaka, where the water is evaporated

and dispersed to the four winds of heaven. But the brook we now followed debouches into the Chaktak-tsangpo and Brahmaputra, and its destiny is the Indian Ocean, over which runs the way to my home.

We had just set up our tents before the yaks came tramping up in close order, followed by their whistling and singing drivers. They went round, not to come too near us. Were they afraid of us or were they suspicious? Were they a cloud, no larger than a man's hand, from which, in due time, a destructive tornado was to burst over our little band, which now for the second time crossed the forbidden land without leave?

CHAPTER LXVI

IN THE ROBBERS' PARADISE

In former times the glacier tongues of Lunpo-gangri ran down into the valley, and traces of them were very conspicuous as we descended to lower country on April 16. The valley is quite full of old moraines, consisting exclusively of granite, and some of them are superficially concealed under fine matter and moss. We passed the large yak caravan again, which was encamping after a very short march. Evidently the men intended to stay over the next day, for the loads were taken off the yaks and piled up. When they mean to set out again the next day they leave the loads on the yaks, for they think it too much trouble to load and unload 350 yaks for a single night. They might stay for us as long as they liked; we should get in advance and pass by Saka-dzong before we were denounced. But no, it would be wiser to avoid Saka-dzong altogether; not to escape the sight of Muhamed Isa's grave, but not to needlessly expose ourselves to suspicion. It was perfectly evident that the authorities would wonder why a small party of Ladakis went along byways instead of following the great *tasam*, and they would hold an inquiry over us.

After the moraines came to an end we traversed a more open expansion of the valley, with luxuriant grass and millions of detestable mouse-holes. We were right glad when Takkar pinched the necks of one or two of these obnoxious rodents. Tubges supplied me with partridges, and one of our goats yielded me a drop of milk. From camp 383 Lunpo-gangri's summits are seen foreshortened, and one of them is as small

as an umbrella. Several peaks are seen to the east-south-east, the continuation of the range, and it is not difficult to infer that Chomo-uchong, the isolated mountain beside the *tasam*, lies in the eastern prolongation of Lunpo-gangri. I took bearings of the higher summits in the neighbourhood from every camp, and shall hereafter make known the results.

The other men make the "Snorer's" life miserable. At eight o'clock he crawls into his lair beside the sheep, and immediately begins his wood-sawing. Some one yells at him, and he wakes up and makes some witty remark, which makes the men laugh, and he never loses his temper. In two minutes he is asleep again and sawing as hard as ever, and is roused by another shout. Only when the others have fallen asleep is he left in peace, and can saw as hard as he likes.

Little Puppy behaves splendidly, is lively, playful, and affectionate. At night he sleeps on the rugs at my feet and helps Takkar to keep watch. They are my companions, and it will be hard to part from them.

April 17. 0.7°. How long this winter has been! Now Lobsang has come to the conclusion that the yak drivers will not denounce us, for fear lest they should be called to account for not spying upon us better. We continue our way down the valley. How delightful only to go for some days to lower country. In some places we see summer camping-grounds; now the country is desolate and deserted.

The river carries down about 70 cubic feet of clear water per second; it has open water only in the middle, and elsewhere is covered with margins of ice 2 feet thick, and icicles hang from their edges. On the banks, field-mice dart about between their holes. The valley contracts and the river often skirts steep cliffs of schist. Most of the tributaries, and the largest of them, come from the chain which is the immediate continuation of Nien-chen-tang-la. The ice becomes thicker the more the valley contracts and the longer it is in shadow. We often cross it from one bank to the other, where it forms a bridge. Stags' horns are set up on a *mani* heap; where do they come from? This valley runs between the two ranges

like the Buptsang-tsangpo. On this day we never see a man or a tent.'

In the evening a night owl again sat screeching above the camp, and the Ladakis were convinced that it meant to warn us against robbers. If these knew that a European with European weapons was in the caravan they would not attack it; but we were only Ladakis, and the Tibetans despise Ladakis and look upon them as cowards.

On the 18th we travelled southwards to the place (15,407 feet) where our valley enters the Rukyok valley, running down from the west-north-west, at the bottom of which some of the Lunpo-gangri summits were again visible. Still no men were to be seen, only numerous summer camping-places. Two horsemen rode past our camp on the other, right, side of the valley. What did they want? Were they spies? We had every reason to suspect a spy in every human being. No; they were kiang hunters from Gertse, who had left their home and were seeking new dwellings in another province, because of some unpleasantness with the Gertse Pun, the potentate whom we were carefully making away from. They informed us that we were a day's journey from Pasa-guk, where I had encamped the year before, and three short marches from Saka-dzong. It was hazardous to pass so near a governor's residence. Abdul Kerim bought one of the riders' horses for 100 rupees.

This day I put on for the first time a new Ladaki costume. The other was too warm, and, being red, was conspicuous among the others. The new coat was made of worn, tattered sackcloth, and was stained with ashes and soot. In this I looked just like the other men. Now I painted my face regularly every day, and he must be a very smart fellow who could find out that I was not a genuine Ladaki. We had hitherto got on remarkably well, and had only a day's journey to a place where I had been the year before. But the nervous tension increased more and more, and I wondered every morning what surprises the new day had in store for us.

April 19. As we were starting, two men passed on foot,

driving before them 200 sheep laden with salt. Our way was the same as theirs and we had to pass them. While I drove our own sheep down the road, Abdul Kerim stopped and talked with the men, to draw off their attention; but we could see that they were interested in our strange party, and looked closely at us. I limped, thinking that the Tibetans had never seen a lame European, if they had seen any European at all. But the people had seen me in Pasa-guk and Saka-dzong the year before, and then I did not halt. I had come off well from our troublesome neighbours and also past the large yak caravan, which a couple of days ago had turned off another way but had now come into ours again. We met a large sheep caravan with a mounted party; a woman was said to be the wife of the Gova of Rukyok. The people we had just met were not so dangerous as those that followed.

We left the Rukyok river farther and farther to the right, and directly to the south appeared quite close the lofty summit which rises above Pasa-guk. We had left the salt-laden sheep and the yaks behind us, and we came at length to the bank of our old friend the Chaktak-tsangpo, which was considerably smaller than at the end of May and beginning of June the year before. Here we left the high-road to the south, and marched northwards along the Chaktak-tsangpo's right, or western bank, where we soon encamped on a meadow (15,203 feet).

When Abdul Kerim came back he was very solemn. He had had great difficulty in answering questions why we followed a byway along the Chaktak-tsangpo instead of taking the highway to Saka-dzong as all other travellers did. He had replied that we were sent to find out how much sheep's wool would be for sale in the country next summer. Then the men of the salt caravan had said: "You cannot be afraid of robbers; they frequent the mountains up here. Are you well armed?"

"Yes, we have two guns and some revolvers."

"You will want them. We see that you are peaceful people, so we warn you. Six days ago a robber band,

eighteen men strong, each with his horse and gun, attacked a tent village here in the neighbourhood. They pillaged 3 tents, took 400 sheep and about 200 yaks, and made off by the road you intend to follow. Men were collected and sent after them, but two were killed and the others ran away. No one knows where the band is now. If you value your lives, keep a sharp watch at night. If they attack you, let them plunder you; you are only thirteen, and cannot defend yourselves."

This was why Abdul Kerim looked so anxious, and it was not to be wondered at. Now we also ran the risk of a night attack, as if it were not trying enough to travel in disguise by byways through the forbidden land. As long as there was daylight the animals were allowed to wander about and graze, but at dusk they were driven up near to the tents. In the evening the men could talk of nothing but robbers. Lobsang, who was a Tibetan himself, took the matter quietly. He said that there were organized bands of as many as a hundred men with a chief at their head, who ordered where raids should be made. But at this season of the year they sat round their fires and tried to look innocent. In his opinion the air must be warmer before they would move. If a robber was caught in the neighbourhood of Gartok, his head and one arm must be sent as a proof to Lhasa, he added. In the principal towns punishment is very severe. For theft an eye is taken out and a hand cut off. A Gova or other magistrate who catches a robber receives a reward or promotion, but one who neglects his duty is punished. We heard that the district near Geddo by the upper Raga-tsangpo is notorious as a regular nest of robbers, and is visited by professional freebooters from Nakchu.

In the twilight the Mohammedans among my Ladakis sang the same melodious hymn I had first heard at Kizil-unkur. "Allahu ekber" echoed among the rocky cliffs; "and it is very effective in protecting true believers against the wiles of the heathen." They had all at once become deeply religious again in the robbers' paradise. "Allahu ekber," God is great.

The night passed peacefully, and early the next morning it was reported that five horsemen were approaching our tents from the north. The field-glass reduced them to two men, a woman, and some yaks. They made a circuit as though they were afraid of us, but Abdul Kerim hailed them to get information about the road. Then we marched on directly eastwards along the northern bank of the Chaktak-tsangpo. The ascent was very gradual, the valley fairly broad and with abundant pasture. No tent was seen, but summer camps were numerous. A cairn marks the place where the Chaktak-tsangpo, coming from the north, 10° W., unites with its tributary the Gebük-chu from the east. To the north-north-east rise two snowy peaks of medium height with small glaciers. It was evident that the Chaktak-tsangpo flows from the country to the north of them, for the deeply excavated transverse valley of the river could be clearly traced. The main river may carry down about 250 cubic feet in a second, and the affluent about 70. In this district the river is called Kamchung-chu; the name Chaktak-tsangpo (Charta-tsangpo, as it is incorrectly called by Nain Sing) is not applied to it above Pasa-guk. We encamped in the angle between the two rivers near a meadow where three horses were feeding. Their owners, who were bivouacking behind a projection near at hand, were from Rukyok and had lost many of their sheep in winter from disease, and had been to a warm spring to dip and save the remainder. We were here about due north of Saka-dzong and about two days' journey from it. But between us and the Governor's residence rose a ridge which is a link in the chain of Lunpo-gangri. In the evening and at night our watchmen fired, as usual, some revolver shots, to inform any chance robbers that we were on our guard.

April 21. As the tents were being taken down, our neighbours went by with 200 sheep. I turned my back to them and busied myself with loading a mule. Then I travelled with the sheep, for there were several more tents farther up, and I could not ride till we came to an uninhabited part of the valley. Several side valleys opened on the left, and at their

ends could sometimes be seen a part of the main crest. We know absolutely nothing of the country to the north of it, but that it cannot be the watershed between the plateau and the sea is evident, and was shown by the Kamchung transverse valley.

After crossing the river twice over bridges of porous ice we encamped near a sheepfold where dry dung was plentiful. The last nomads had told us that next day we should come to a large tent, the property of an influential old man named Kamba Tsenam, who owned 1000 yaks and 5000 sheep. He would evidently be our next difficulty, and if we slipped past him the country would be open to us as far as Raga-tasam. We are satisfied when, as on this day, we have again gained nearly 9 miles without being interfered with; but how shall we fare to-morrow?—this is the standing question we ask ourselves every evening. It is certainly an advantage to travel along out-of-the-way paths where we escape notice, but if any sharp Gova or governor hears us spoken of, he cannot help being suspicious of our strange proceedings, and instituting a close inquiry. Now the salt caravan which we passed has already arrived at Saka-dzong; we are, indeed, to the east of that place, but we travel so slowly that we can never escape pursuit. Our excitement grows daily. I am tired and weary of this self-imposed confinement, and long for it to come to an end. What shall we do then? That I know not. We have penetrated so far that a crisis must come. I have managed to travel through Bongba, but my plans for the immediate future are very indefinite and depend on circumstances. We will get on as far as we can.

April 22 was a day when we knew that the definite crisis was coming very much nearer. Abdul Kerim, Kunchuk, and Gaffar set out first to pay a visit to Kamba Tsenam and keep his attention riveted on the sale of food and horses. We followed after, and crossed the river twice on cracking bridges of ice, kept along the northern bank, and passed a side valley, at the mouth of which stood three tents, where our men were in the midst of a group of Tibetans who were showing their

horses. Gulam had warned me in time, so I dismounted and went and looked after our last mules. As soon as we were concealed by a bank terrace I could ride again. The pleasure did not last long, for at the next side valley on the north I had to dismount again before another tent, where a pack of savage dogs were encountered by Takkar and Little Puppy, who, save the mark, would help to defend us, but received a nip in the neck and had to be rescued. Here we lost Kutus and Tubges, who remained at the tent, while our diminished party continued on its way eastwards.

At a spur on the northern side of the valley a couple of elegant *mani* heaps were erected, and by one of them a streamer pole was set up. It had snowed thickly ever since eight o'clock, but the valley was so narrow that we could not pass all the tents unseen. Just at the projecting point a large valley ran in from the north: we only guessed at it, for everything was hidden in the snowstorm. Gulam went a little way ahead and gave me the sign to dismount. Immediately in front of the point stood four tents and a small stone cabin, where a man stood watching us, and also a chief's tent of such huge dimensions that I never saw its like; it was as large as a house. Here we left Lobsang and Abdul Rasak, and went on eastwards with a much diminished party. The chief volume of the Gebuk-chu comes from the northern valley; in our valley, which we knew led to the Gebuk-la, only a brook was left. We set up our tents on the terrace at the mouth of a northern side valley. All the country was white, and not a shadow could be seen of the surroundings.

Our three tents stood as usual close together, mine with its opening up the valley, that is, eastwards. After a while the men left behind came up and gave their reports in turn. They had bought provisions for two days, and had learned that the district was called Gebuk-yung. The next day we should go over the Gebuk-la and encamp at the foot of the Kinchen-la, from the top of which we should see Raga-tasam the following day. Of course it was risky for three parties of our men to visit three tents near together, for the Tibetans always asked

about the routes we had followed and our plans, and our men might in their haste give discordant answers. In the large tent Lobsang had been cross-examined, and had answered that we came from the Gertse Pun, who had advised us to take this byroad because we should reach Raga-tasam two days sooner than if we went through Saka-dzong. "Quite true," the Tibetans answered, but also warned us against robbers, for thirteen Ladakis would be but a mouthful for an ordinary robber band, and the country was very unsafe. "It is well for you that you have good weapons," they said.

Lastly, Abdul Kerim turned up with his purchases. He had learned that all the tents we had seen in the day belonged to Kamba Tsenam, who lived himself in the largest, but he happened to be in Saka-dzong, where an assembly had been convened in anticipation of an impending visit from a high Chinese official, and the question what present should be made to him had to be decided. Kamba Tsenam owned thirty-five horses, which were grazing beyond Gebuk-la, and if the rich nomad returned in the evening we should certainly be able to buy some from him.

"You say," declared an elderly man in Kamba Tsenam's service, "that you are a *tsongpun* (merchant) from Ladak. Why then do you travel by this dangerous side route? Here you can drive no trade. How have you found the way? Why have you travelled in winter? Why do you ask the names of the valleys?"

"I have to write down all the names," he answered, "that we may find the way again in summer, for I am commissioned to make large purchases of wool."

"That is well, you shall have several hundred bales of sheep's wool from us. I will give you a guide in the morning; you will pay him a rupee for two days. Without him you cannot find your way over the Gebuk-la, especially when the ground is covered with snow."

Abdul Kerim had thanked him for his kindness and then had come to look for us. We were sitting and deliberating when two riders armed with guns came up to our tents. They

were close upon us when they appeared out of the snowstorm. We just managed to close my tent and fasten up Takkar before the entrance. The elder man was Abdul Kerim's friend from the large tent, the other the youth who was offered to us as a guide. They tied up their horses and went nonchalantly into Abdul Kerim's tent. Here they sat and gossiped for an hour, and offered a large handsome white horse for sale at the price of 127 rupees. Abdul Kerim bought it, whereupon they asked how much money he had with him, and whether he was not afraid of being attacked. Afterwards they went about the tents and looked around, and I drew a breath of relief when they at last vanished in the snow with the other horse.

Now we considered the situation. To refuse the guide would seem extremely suspicious, for the snow already lay a foot deep, and the path—all we had to depend on—was covered up. But to have a stranger, a spy, in the caravan for two days and a night was still more dangerous. When Kutus and Sedik went back a little later to the large tent to fetch a bowl of sour milk, they were told to say that our *tsongpun* did not want a guide, for we should remain quiet a day, either here or at the next camp. "Your *tsongpun* speaks with two tongues, he does not know what he wants," the men answered.

We left this dangerous place on April 23 before the sun was up, and I went first with the sheep in case our neighbours paid a morning visit. The weather cleared and the sun came out, and then the snow quickly evaporated. Farther up all the valley floor was covered with a continuous sheet of ice. In front of us was seen the pass Gebuk-la. Here a little old man was following ten mares. He pretended not to see us, but he was soon overtaken by Abdul Kerim and Kunchuk, who kept him company most of the day. With Lobsang I rested half an hour on the pass, at a height of 16,978 feet. To the east and south-east of us lay an entanglement of mountains and valleys, and without the horse-tender we had so fortunately found it would have been quite impossible to find our way over the succession of small saddles which followed. To the south-south-east the snowy massive of

Chomo-uchong rose in radiant sunshine; to the north was a huge crest, which I, like Ryder, took for the main range of the Trans-Himalaya and the watershed, but this turned out afterwards to be a mistake.

The horse-driver took us up a secondary saddle, at the eastern foot of which runs a deeply eroded valley, which, coming from the north, 10° E., is the upper section of the valley we followed last year, and which runs down to Basang, where I saw Muhamed Isa for the last time among the number of the living. Here was the driver's tent, and to escape his company during the night we continued our march after the stranger had given us instructions about the way. Our camp 390 was situated in the mouth of a small valley on the ascent to the Kinchen-la, where we were overwhelmed in a terribly dense and violent snowstorm.

The guide, who had so fortunately appeared at the right moment, had said in the presence of our men that he was Kamba Tsenam's brother and a great yak-slayer. The year before he had seen in Saka-dzong a European whose caravan leader, a big strong fellow, had inspired respect wherever he showed himself. But he had died suddenly in Saka, and his comrades had digged a long hole in the ground where they had laid him. He thought it strange that Ladakis, who were of the same faith as the Tibetans, would travel with and serve the hated Europeans.

For the future we determined to observe yet greater caution. Two or three Ladakis should always wear dark eye-glasses, so that mine might not seem so peculiar. As soon as we could buy woollen material all the men should have new clothes, so that I in my rags would seem the poorest and meanest of the party.

CHAPTER LXVII

APRIL 24

IN these days our life was dismal and lonesome, and our future uncertain. We went as in the dark, feeling with our hands lest we should fall. Every day which passed without any untoward event came upon me as a complete surprise. We had now only two days' journey to Raga-tasam on the great highway, where caravans and travellers fare to and fro, and Government officials are responsible that no unauthorized person slips past. I was thoroughly sick of my disguise and the constant uncertainty, and longed for a crisis to free me from my embarrassment. But to deliver ourselves, of our own free will, into the hands of the Tibetans was out of the question. They must detect us themselves, and till then the strain on our nerves must continue.

April 24—the anniversary of the *Vega's* return to Stockholm in 1880! At sunrise the whole country lay under a bright wintry shroud of white snow. The thermometer had fallen to $2\frac{1}{2}°$, but when the sun mounted up the horses steamed, and light clouds of vapour rose up from the snow, so that we might have been riding through a land of solfataras and fumaroles. Our caravan animals struggled bravely up the tough ascent. Of sheep we had only twenty left, and two of them were veterans from Lumbur-ringmo-tso. Twice we thought that the pass, Kinchen-la, was just before us, but new heights rose farther back, and we worked our way up hills, among which brooks run down towards Basang and Saka-dzong, where Muhamed Isa sleeps in his mound. To the south-west

Chomo-uchong's summits presented a grand sight. At length we made the last ascent up to the top of the pass, where the height is 17,851 feet above sea-level. At the other side a river runs north-east, one of the headwaters of the Raga-tsangpo. To the west there is a brilliant spectacle, the summits of Lunpo-gangri rising in sharp and savage beauty from a maze of mountains and ridges, which shine in lighter bluer shades the more remote they are. To the north-east we catch a glimpse of an outlying ridge covered from foot to crest with new-fallen snow. The broad flat valley of the Raga-tsangpo stretches eastwards as far as the eye can see. In the far distance to the east-south-east a grand snowy crest shines forth, the northernmost of the Himalayan system.

We stayed a long time at the top, and I sketched a panorama. Then we followed the track of the caravan over the lower shoulders of two mountains, and found our camp pitched in a valley with good grass and a brook partially frozen. My tent looked towards its bank, and all three stood as usual in a line. This day also had passed satisfactorily, but all would be different next day, for then we should come to Raga-tasam, where we encamped last year and stayed a week. Camp 391 was, then, the last where we could still feel at ease, for we had seen no living being all day long, and had no neighbours. Here, then, we must arrange some fresh safeguards.

We must sort out from our already scanty baggage all articles that might excite suspicion, as, for example, the small padded leather box in which the theodolite was packed; for the future it would be rolled with its inner wooden case in my bed. Further, the hypsometer's leather case and the actinometer, which probably would never be used again. Whatever was combustible was to be thrown into the fire and the rest buried. A couple of rugs of camel's wool were also to be discarded.

To begin with, we must make a change in our housing arrangements. I was to sleep for the last time in my old weather-beaten tent, where our chief, Abdul Kerim, was hence-

forth to set up his quarters and receive guests. For me a compartment of about 2 square yards, not larger than my bed, was partitioned off in Abdul Kerim's tent. This crib, which, when the camp was set up, was enclosed on all sides, was henceforth to be my prison cell. It was like a secret drawer in a bureau, and when it was ready I inspected it and found it somewhat narrow but comfortable.

Suen was my hairdresser, and he had just completed his business when Abdul Kerim looked in at the tent opening and whispered that four men with yaks were coming up the valley on the road we had to go down from the Kinchen-la. I hurriedly set my disguise in order and wound the turban round my head, while the flap was fastened, and Takkar was tied up before my tent. Then I looked through the peephole in the tent canvas on the side towards the upper end of the valley, and saw eight men on foot in dark-blue and red dresses, with red scarves round their heads, all armed with guns and swords, and leading nine horses; one man led two laden horses. What in the world did this mean? They were not robbers, for they come suddenly and at night. They seemed rather men in Government service; the two in front were certainly officials. My men occupied themselves at their fire; I could see that they were a prey to the greatest uneasiness.

The strangers came straight to our camp-fire as if it were the end of their journey. They formed a circle round Abdul Kerim, Lobsang, Kutus, and Gulam, and began an animated but subdued conversation. Three of them, evidently servants, led the horses to a spot barely thirty paces from my tent and right in front of it. There they took off all the saddles and loads, sent off the horses to graze, brought out pots and cans, arranged three stones in order, collected fuel, made a fire, fetched water in a large pot and cooked tea. It was plain that they intended to camp here for the night, and that they had intruded on us for the purpose of watching us.

The other five entered Abdul Kerim's tent, threw themselves down, and continued the conversation in the same low quiet voice and in thoroughly polite and measured tones. I

could not catch what they said, but that the affair was serious I could only too plainly perceive, for I heard my name mentioned—Hedin Sahib. After a good hour's conversation they went out again and made a tour round my tent, but the furious Takkar would not let them approach the door. But they discovered the peephole in the side of the tent, and a man put his finger in and looked through the hole, but I was lying against the folds of the tent on the same side, so he could not see me. Then they went and threw themselves down in a circle round the fire, brought out their wooden cups and drank tea. They sat right in front of the entrance to my tent, and I could not get out without being seen.

Then Abdul Kerim whispered from the back of my tent and inside his own, and told me what the men had said. The leader, a stoutish young man of good appearance, had put the usual questions and received the usual answers. Then he had uttered the following words in a serious and decided tone:

"News of your arrival has come to the Governor of Saka-dzong through two salt caravans which passed your party above Pasa-guk. As it has never occurred that a merchant from Ladak has come from the north and has travelled on the byway through Gebuk, the Governor and the other authorities in Saka suspected that Hedin Sahib might be concealed among you, and the more so because he himself expressed his wish last year to come back again and travel through the mountainous regions in the north. Therefore my comrades and I received orders to follow your trail, overtake you, and subject you to the most searching examination. We are in no hurry, and in the morning we shall get several yak-loads of provisions. You protest that Hedin Sahib is not among you disguised as a Ladaki. Well, it may be that you are telling the truth. But remember, *tsongpun*, that we shall carry out our orders to the letter. You are thirteen men from Ladak, you say, and I can see only ten. Where are the others?"

"They are out collecting fuel."

"Good. When you are all assembled here we intend to search you down to the skin. Then we shall turn out all your baggage and empty every sack we find in your tents. And if in this examination we find nothing belonging to a European, it will remain for you to give a written declaration that no European is among your party concealed or disguised, and under this declaration you must set your name-stamp. Then you can travel early in the morning where you like, and we shall return to Saka."

When I heard this report the situation became quite clear to me, and I at once decided what I would do. But first I crept by the secret way into the caravan leader's tent, where I found myself surrounded by my retainers, except three, who were to warn us if the Tibetans came back again.

"What is to be done?" I asked Abdul Kerim.

"The Sahib knows best himself. As far as I can see, our condition is hopeless," answered the honest man, who had got us out of many a scrape before.

"What does Lobsang think?"

"It would not be wise to give them such a declaration," he answered with a very troubled face.

"Sahib," suggested Kutus, "if they give us breathing-time till night, the Sahib and I can hide among the mountains as at the time when we were close to Tsongpun Tashi. When the search is over we can rejoin the caravan farther down. I can carry the Sahib's papers, and other European articles can be buried in the ground under the tent."

"They know that we are thirteen," remarked Gulam.

Under the force of circumstances we had made our way right across Tibet with a trumped-up story, but to let Abdul Kerim confirm a false document with his name-stamp on my account was a little too strong even for my geographical conscience. I could not consent to that. Whatever might happen, our position was still a strong one. We were in the heart of Tibet. The next move would be that we should be sent out of the country, and by whatever way we were obliged to go, I should certainly gain something more. I would

absolutely refuse to go to Ladak, but I would be content to go to India through Nepal, or, better still, through Gyangtse.

"No," I said to my men as I rose up, "I shall give myself up to the Tibetans."

Then they were all amazed, and began to cry and sob like children.

"Why do you weep?" I asked.

"We shall part here for good, and the Sahib will be killed," they answered.

"Oh no, it is not as bad as that," I said, for it was not the first time I had been caught by Tibetans.

When I walked out of the tent I heard behind me the murmur of Mohammedan prayers: "Allahu ekber—Bismillah rahman errahim."

In my usual disguise from top to toe, and with my face painted black, I walked with slow, deliberate steps straight to the circle of Tibetans. When I was close to them they all rose up, as if they knew that I was no ordinary Ladaki.

"Sit down," I said, with a dignified gesture of invitation, and sat down myself between the two principal men. In the one on my right hand I recognized at once the Pemba Tsering of the year before. I clapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Do you know me again, Pemba Tsering?" He answered not a word, but looked with wide-opened eyes at his comrades, and nodded towards me, as much as to say "It is he." They were mightily dumbfoundered and disconcerted: no one spoke, some looked at one another, others gazed into the fire, one threw a couple of sticks among the stones, and another took small sips of tea.

Then I spoke again: "Yes, truly, Pemba Tsering, you are quite right; I am Hedin Sahib, who visited Saka-dzong last year. Here you have me again; what do you mean to do with me?"

Abdul Kerim, Lobsang, and Kutus stood behind, trembling like aspen leaves, and expecting that preparations for an execution would be the next move.

Still they made no answer, but began to whisper together

in groups. The younger official, who was evidently the cock of the walk, for the others looked at him and waited for him to speak, began to look through his papers, and picked out one, which he read in silence. As they were so long in recovering from their consternation—for they had not expected to get hold of me so easily—I sent Kutus for a box of Egyptian cigarettes, and offered them all round. Each took one with thanks, and lighted it after I had set an example and showed them that the cigarettes were not filled with gunpowder. Then the ice was broken, and the leader began to speak very softly and without looking at me.

"Yesterday strict orders came from the Devashung that the Governor of Saka would be held responsible for Europeans who might sneak into the country from the west, and if any European showed himself he must be immediately forced to return by the way he came. When the report reached Saka of a caravan two days' journey off, the Governor suspected that it might be you, Hedin Sahib, and we have now accomplished our task. In the Governor's name we forbid you to take another step eastwards. We beg you to conform in all things to our directions; our heads and your personal safety are at stake. To-morrow you will follow us over the Kinchen-la to Saka-dzong."

"I said last year that I must and would see the mountain region north of Saka. Now I have seen it, and you have not been able to prevent me. You see then that I can do more in your country than yourselves. Now I intend to travel back to India, but by which way only Lien Darin, Amban of Lhasa, shall decide. It is therefore my intention to write to him, and I shall not go anywhere before his answer comes."

"We do not wish you to travel by any other way than the one you choose, but we have no authority to forward a letter to Lhasa; the Governor will decide the question himself. It is with him you must treat; you must meet him personally. Therefore we will accompany you to-morrow to Saka-dzong."

"No, sir, anywhere else you please, but not to Saka-dzong. You know that my caravan leader died and lies buried there,

It is against my principles to visit a place where I have buried a faithful servant. You shall never get me to Saka-dzong even if you raise all Tibet."

"If it would trouble you to see Saka-dzong again, we will certainly not urge you to go thither. Will you instead have the kindness to follow us to Semoku by the Tsangpo, on the *tasam*, which is only two days' journey to the south-west? I will then write to the Governor and ask him to meet you there."

"Good; I will follow you to Semoku to-morrow."

"Thanks; I will at once send an express messenger to inform the Governor, so that you may not have to wait at Semoku. But tell me why you have come back again? You travel and travel in Tibet and you are always sent away, but always come back again. Had you not enough last year, when you were obliged to leave the country by the road to Ladak? And now you turn up again among us. How is that possible, and why are you come?"

"Because I love your country and your friendly people to such a degree that I cannot live without them."

"H'm! It is very kind of you to say so, but would it not be better if you were to love your own country a little more? As long as we do not travel in your country, you should not travel in ours; we remain at home, and the best thing you can do is to remain in your country."

"As long as I can sit in a saddle I shall come back. You can inform the Devashung at your leisure that their Excellencies may look for more visits."

They laughed pleasantly and looked at one another, as much as to say: "If he likes to come back, he is welcome as far as we are concerned." And my Ladakis laughed and were extremely astonished that our last day of freedom had come to so peaceful and merry an ending. The Tibetans were exceedingly agreeable, polite, and gentle, and never uttered a hard or peevish word about the trouble that I had again brought upon them. And when the old wool story, which Abdul Kerim a little while before had tried to cram down their throats, was referred to, they laughed heartily and thought

that it was a grand device. They are so accustomed to lie themselves that they have a great admiration for any one else who succeeds in deceiving them. They thought it very wonderful that we had been able to cross the whole country without detection, and believed that I must possess some mysterious powers of which they knew nothing, and that they must be very cautious in dealing with me.

The young official, who was named Rinche Dorche, but was called Rindor, a contraction of the two names, wrote a long letter to the Governor of Saka, saying that I was the same Hedin Sahib who had been here the year before, that we had come to a friendly agreement to proceed to Semoku, that I did not wish to travel to Ladak but straight to India, and that Lien Darin alone was to decide on the route. The letter was sealed, and despatched by a mounted courier over the Kinchen-la.

Then we talked and jested again, and before sunset we were as intimate as though we had been friends from childhood. We might have made an appointment to meet in this barren valley and been glad to have found one another. It was easy to understand that the Tibetans were pleased. They little thought when the sun rose that they would make such a good catch before evening. The successful issue of their mission would be of great advantage; they would be commended by the Governor and gain promotion. For my part I had a feeling of unmixed satisfaction. Our freedom was at an end, but for me it had been nothing but an exceedingly enervating captivity. Now, for the first time, I felt perfectly free, and was no longer a prisoner in my own tent; I should have no need of that wretched hiding-hole in Abdul Kerim's tent. The Tibetans laughed loudly at my ragged, smutty, greasy dress of coarse grey sackcloth, in which I looked like a convict, or, at best, like a begging monk of the Grey Friars' confraternity. Then they understood how I had succeeded in crossing Bongba unseen and unknown. How delightful it would be to throw my rags into the fire and clothe myself in a clean neat Tibetan costume, to be no longer obliged to hide

my papers and instruments in rice sacks, and not to have to paint my face black as a Moor's instead of washing myself. As soon as we had parted from our new friends in the evening, Gulam took a hand-basin of warm water into my tent, and then I had a good scrubbing from top to toe, and the water showed that I wanted it. He had to change the water four times before I was tolerably clean. Then I clipped my Mohammedan beard to the skin, and sadly missed the razors I had thrown away. But I was glad that we had not burned the things we had condemned some hours earlier.

Rindor begged the loan of one of our tents, as their own transport train was not expected till the morning. Besides Pemba Tsering, there were two other men I had known the year before. They were all very friendly, and said that we had tipped them very generously. There was also a wrinkled old man in the party, who was always smoking a Chinese pipe. His name was Kamba Tsenam, and it was his tent near which we had so nearly been detained two days before.

Thus ended April 24, 1908. Strange, melancholy thoughts took possession of me when I went to bed. The Tibetans had again thwarted my plans—I know not how many times they had done so. Our future was dark as ever, but it had arrived at a new stage, and on the 25th we should wake up to begin a new chapter. The deep silence in the valley was only disturbed occasionally by Takkar, when the faithful dog barked at the Tibetans. His bark was re-echoed from both flanks as though three dogs kept guard over us. And the everlasting stars glittered as before over our lonely tents.

CHAPTER LXVIII

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF SAKA

On April 25 we rode in a compact body to the mouth of a valley east of Chomo-uchong, called Radak. Six Tibetans guarded me on both sides, and our journey had some resemblance to a convict train. Now I was not obliged to dismount before we passed a tent. On the left hand was a large open plain where Raga-tasam is situated. A shot was heard in the deserted country, and Rindor sent two men to see what it was. An antelope hunter! He was arrested and beaten; for the Government, at ecclesiastical instigation, had forbidden the extinction of life for three years, except in the case of sheep and yaks. I was reminded of the agreement to forbid Europeans to travel in Tibet for three years.

Now I drew my map of the route, took compass bearings, and sketched a panorama quite at my ease. The Tibetans wondered at me and questioned me, but did not trouble themselves much about my work. And I had plenty of time to think of the line of policy I should adopt during the following negotiations. I knew that they would urge me to return by the way I had come, through Bongba, or by the road I had taken to Ladak the year before. For my part, I had now had enough of Tibet and I longed to get home, and wished to avoid routes that involved loss of time and that I knew already. Now I only wished to travel to India *viâ* Shigatse and Gyangtse, and I would try to obtain permission to travel to these towns by roads where no one had been before. After the excitement in which we had lived so long

came a reaction. I was worn-out, weary, and indifferent to everything except the nearest way home. Therefore I sat down and wrote a letter of fifteen pages to Lien Darin, referred to his friendly letter sent to Gartok, gave an account of our last journey, pointed out to him that no Great Power could take it amiss if I travelled out of the country through Gyangtse, promised that in return I would give him information about the occurrences of gold and salt I had seen, and about the measures which should be taken for the promotion of sheep-breeding,—all natural resources, which would contribute to the advancement of China's newest province, Tibet. And I concluded my letter with wishes for the happiness and prosperity of Lien Darin himself and peace to his forefathers' graves.

I did not doubt a moment that he would give his consent to such a modest request, and I saw in my mind's eye the dramatic scene when I should make my first call on Major O'Connor in Tibetan dress, and have a little fun with him before I made myself known. But I may as well say at once that this long epistle to Lien Darin was never sent. My opponent's tactics lured me to a contest in which he was checkmated in two moves. My merit was as little now as formerly; I was always a marionette, and the hands which held the strings hung over the paths where the clouds and stars move.

In the evening I had a visit from Pemba Tsering and Kamba Tsenam. The former was much more gentle and friendly than the year before; the latter was a great humorist, who did not seem at all annoyed that he had omitted to close the bag when he had us in it, and had let a valuable booty fall into the hands of another. They had heard of my adventurous voyages on Tso-mavang, and were astonished that I had escaped with my life.

Two short days' marches took us over the pass Kule-la and down to the valley where Semoku stands on the great high-road. Here stood some scattered tents, and the Governor and his colleagues had established themselves in the small stone house

of the station. All the more important posts in Tibet are entrusted to two gentlemen: thus, for example, there are always two garpuns or viceroys in Gartok, a system adopted with the intention that one shall control the other or shall inform of the other if he is guilty of any roguery. In Saka-dzong, however, the one governor seemed to be of higher rank than the other; at any rate, he conducted all the negotiations as though he possessed greater authority.

As soon as we were ready Rindor and two other men came into my tent and brought a message from the Governor that he awaited me in the station-house. I answered, that if he wanted anything of me he might come to my tent. It was not long before a party of men crossed the hundred yards between our dwellings. I went out to meet them, invited them to come in and sit down as far as the space allowed, took up my position on my bed, and had before me three gentlemen, namely, Dorche Tsuen, *pun* or Governor of Saka-dzong, Ngavang, his colleague, and Oang Gye, his eighteen-year-old son. A crowd of servants, nomads, and soldiers crowded together at the tent door.

Pun Dorche Tsuen is an unusually tall Tibetan, forty-three years old, of sympathetic and refined appearance, dressed in a Chinese costume of silk, with a small silk cap on his head, a pigtail behind, and velvet boots. He is a man of wealth, owning large flocks in the province over which he rules and a stone house in Lhasa, his home, for he is an *upa* or domiciled inhabitant of the province Ü, the capital of which is Lhasa. There dwell three of his four sons, and one of them is a young lama. His wife has been dead some years.

Ngavang, his coadjutor, is a little, fat, kindly man in Tibetan costume, but with a Chinese cap and pigtail. Oang Gye wears his hair in Tibetan fashion, wears no head-covering, and, like his father, is exceedingly sympathetic and good-natured.

"I hope that you have had a successful journey and have not suffered much from cold," said Dorche Tsuen.

"Oh, it was cold, and we have lost our caravan, our

clothes are in rags, and our provisions are at an end, but, as you see, that is of no consequence to us."

"At the time of your visit to Saka-dzong last year I was in Tsonka, but I received an account of your movements. You were sent away. Why have you come back again?"

"To visit the districts I was then prevented from seeing. I am ashamed to have given you the trouble of coming here from Saka-dzong. I hope that we shall soon come to an agreement about the route I am to take in order to leave the country."

Now I should have to play my cards well. I had changed my mind during the last few days. I had rested, the reaction after the excitement of travelling in disguise had passed away, and I was exceedingly eager to attempt some new discoveries before I gave up the game. I had, it is true, succeeded in making a very valuable traverse across Bongba, I had travelled straight across the word "Unexplored" on the latest English map of Tibet—yea, I had passed between the *p* and *l*, so that "unexp" lay on the west side of my route and "lored" on the east. But I had left quite untouched two extensive stretches of the large blank patch, and I dreamed of nothing else than to cross Bongba again by two fresh routes. It would certainly take four or five months to return to India after a northerly zigzag course, instead of a couple of weeks if I made for British territory through Gyangtse, as I intended at first. But if I succeeded in making the northerly detour I should carry home material of perhaps greater value than the discoveries already made. Dorche Tsuen answered with firm decision:

"As to your way back, I will tell you at once: not a step further east; my head depends on it. Here you see the order I received a couple of days ago from the Devashung. I will read it to you. Last year you travelled without leave to Nepal, to Kubi-gangri, across the holy lake, round Kang-rinpoche, and to Yumba-matsen. I know exactly where you went. You cannot do the same this year. It is probably in consequence of your journey in all sorts of forbidden directions that the

Devashung has distributed through the country instructions regarding Europeans. Two officials have recently been sent from Lhasa to Shansa-dzong to see that no European approaches the holy city from Naktsang. Some time ago a Chinese officer with 200 soldiers was moved to Tingri to guard the country from intrusion from the south. Not even a Gurkha or a Hindu can now travel in Tibet without especial permission. The other day I received a letter from the Chinese frontier official in Tingri which I will read to you. As you see, he orders me to force any European who may come to Saka from the north to return in his own footsteps. If he refuses, I have to send off a messenger to Tingri, and shall receive assistance in a few days from the soldiers stationed there. Times are changed in Tibet. If you will not listen to me and travel back by the way you came, I will send a messenger to Tingri. But, like you, I hope that we shall come to an agreement without unpleasantness and outside interference."

My next move was a feint, namely, to try for the Gyangtse route; I would in the end conform to his wishes and give up the Gyangtse route under the condition that I should not be compelled to travel along roads I knew already. I pointed out how near we were to Gyangtse, and how easily he would get rid of me if I went thither, but nothing made any impression on him. He only answered, "All that is true, but the road is closed to you."

"Well, I will give it up for your sake, but only on condition that you forward a letter from me to the British Trade Agent in Gyangtse. You can understand that my family are disturbed at my long absence and are looking for news of me."

"Yes, I can understand that, but I regret to say that I cannot forward your correspondence. All the authorities in Tibet are strictly forbidden to assist a European in any way, as he has no right to travel in the country."

"You will perhaps allow two of my own servants to carry a letter from me to Gyangtse?"

"No, never!"

"Well, at least, you can inform the Devashung of my

arrival, and ask the Government to send notice of it to Gyangtse."

"I sent a messenger to the Devashung as soon as I received the letter from Rindor. They will know in Lhasa in a few days that you are come here again."

I had never induced any Tibetan magistrate to forward my letters. That Dorche Tsuen refused to do me such a trifling service had the deplorable consequence that my family did not receive any reliable report of me till September, and therefore supposed that some misfortune had befallen me. Instead of reaching the frontier in a couple of weeks, I was sent back again into the silence of Tibet, and the waves washed again over our track. But I took it for granted that news of our arrival on the *tasam* would penetrate to Gyangtse both officially and through reports, and would then be made known everywhere. Such, however, was not the case, and after we left the *tasam* our fate was buried in the same complete silence as before.

"No, Hedin Sahib," Dorche Tsuen cried out, "the only way open to you is the one by which you came from the north."

"I will never travel by that road. It is no use talking about it."

"You must."

"You cannot force me to do so. To begin with, I will not let you know which way I came, and I travelled in disguise."

"It does not matter. It is very well known that you came from the Samye-la and the Kinchen-la. Beyond that the escort I shall send with you will ask the way from tent to tent."

"The nomads will answer that they have seen no Ladakis for fear of being punished."

"I shall find means of making them confess more than you think."

"You can kill me if you like, but you shall never force me to travel over the Samye-la. Remember that I am a European and a friend of the Tashi Lama. You may lose your button."

Much disturbed, Dorche Tsuen conferred in whispers with Ngavang.

"I will give way so far for your sake that I will allow you to return to Ladak by the same road you followed last year, through Tradum, Tuksum, Shamsang, Parka, and Gartok."

That was the very solution I most feared. If there were any road in all Tibet that I wished to avoid at any cost it was the road to Ladak. I answered:

"Never! Not a step on the great high-road to Ladak!"

"But why? You ought to be thankful for so great a concession."

"It is forbidden by the laws of my country for a man to return in his own footsteps. You can cut my throat; but you will not force me to do anything of the sort."

"You must have strange laws in your country. May I hear which way you really wish to take?"

"I have already said through Gyangtse. You refused and I understand your motive. You have urged me to go back to the north. Even in this respect I will conform to your wishes, but only on the condition that I am not obliged to retrace my steps. I will go over another pass east of the Samye-la and northwards to the Teri-nam-tso and then westwards by the shortest way out of Tibet."

"That is not to be thought of. But let us take the matter quietly. Will you agree to accompany me to Kamba Tsenam's tent, four days' journey from here? You have been there already, and before we reach it we shall have come to some understanding."

"Yes, willingly."

Opposition spurred me on. It now became a point of honour to win a new game of chess. My position was very strong. The *tasam* was eliminated. If I could only cross the Trans-Himalaya by a more easterly pass, I should by some ruse or other gain the Teri-nam-tso, Mendong-gompa, the lower Buptsang-tsangpo, the Tarok-tso, Selipuk, and an eighth Trans-Himalayan pass. Yes, now I must, if ever, play my cards well. I still felt young and strong. The political entanglement which encompassed me on all sides in Tibet rendered it difficult for me to make geographical discoveries,

but it stimulated my ambition. Therefore I remember with particular warmth and sympathy all those who, in virtue of their temporary power in the world, sought to raise obstacles in my way.

We then talked on various subjects. He wished to see our weapons, and asked if he could buy a revolver. "No; you shall have it as a present, cartridges and all, if you will let me go the way I have proposed."

"H'm!"

"You must procure us all the provisions we need for two months, besides new shoes, clothing, tobacco, horses, mules, yaks."

"With pleasure; make out a list of all you want."

It was done at once. Meal, *tsamba*, tea, sugar, Japanese cigarettes, which were said to be procurable—all was to be brought from Tsongka, whither mounted men were sent the same day across the Tsangpo and over the Nevu-la. Everything was to be in our tents in a week. The rest could be obtained from Saka-dzong. In the evening I paid an equally long return visit to my valiant friend Pun Dorche Tsuen, and at night I consigned my letter to Lien Darin to the flames. Ah no! no Chinese interference in Tibeto-Swedish affairs.

On the 28th we remained quiet and visited one another by the hour together. The two governors sat on benches fastened to the wall, Rindor and Oang Gye on mats on the floor, and all four played at dice. The two dice were shaken in a wooden bowl, and turned out on to a round piece of skin. The markers were small Indian snail-shells. Then they played with Chinese dominoes. Meanwhile they drank tea, smoked pipes, sang, joked, laughed, and moved the bricks with wonderful and graceful dexterity. Ngavang won ten *tengas* and was greatly elated. In this way they pass the time when the day's work is done. Rindor is the Governor's private secretary, and on a bench and a table lay piles of documents and letters, written on coarse Chinese paper, and folded up one on another. The Governor's correspondence now comes to Semoku, and his daily work must run its course. His province, Saka, is

very extensive, and he states with some pride that his power stretches to Sangsang in the east, to the Nevu-la in the south, to the Marium-la in the west, and northwards some days' journey beyond Kamba Tsenam's tent.

The illustrious gentlemen were much amused with my costume. "You are a Sahib," they said; "you were for six weeks the guest of the Tashi Lama; you employ one caravan after another, and leave a quantity of money behind you, and yet are dressed more shabbily than any of your servants."

At night their horses and mules were driven to the station-house by soldiers, and we ought to have taken the same precaution, for our horses were attacked by wolves. The brown horse we had bought two weeks before for 100 rupees had his two right feet tied together lest he should run away, and the wolves directed their attack on him, as he could not escape, ate him up, and took the head off with them. At any rate it was missing in the morning from the skeleton, which was pretty closely stripped.

On April 29 we rode together on the road down the Semoku valley, which runs to the upper Brahmaputra. This we left on the left hand, as well as the *tasam*, and ascended a valley where the little village of Ushy with its stone huts and barley fields is situated. The 150 inhabitants are at home only at seedtime and harvest; the rest of the year they are away, tending their sheep. Thence we proceeded the following day to the pass Ushy-la. The way is marked by a succession of *mani* heaps and *chhortens*, and the pass by rods so thin as to be invisible at a distance, and the streamers they carry look like a flock of tied birds. A little farther to the north-west we crossed the path Gye-la, where Chomo-uchong makes a fine display, and soon after we were on the main pass of the same name (16,135 feet). From a hill near, the eye can sweep over all the horizon, the peaks and glaciers of the Himalayas, Chomo-uchong, and close at hand to the south-south-east the Brahmaputra valley with the river meandering in several arms. We encamped on the bank of the Sachu-tsangpo, which flows into the Chaktak-tsangpo west of Saka-

dzong. Here also lies a votive block of a hard green rock, covered with offerings, bits of butter, and streamers.

The 1st of May was celebrated by a march over the Lamlung-la, a difficult pass, on the saddle of which, 16,791 feet high, the traveller is again rewarded by a magnificent view over this complicated sea of mountains. From here Chomo-uchong's seven summits appear in a compact group; the central one is of a regular conical shape and is pure white all over; the others consist chiefly of black cliffs and projections, from among which issue small blue-tinged glaciers. The length of the massive corresponds to that of Lunpo-gangri, of which it is a continuation.

In the Namchen valley our united camp formed quite a little village, for all the chiefs of the country were convened to a consultation. And here it was that Rindor and Pemba Tsering joined us with all the goods we had ordered from Saka-dzong. We stayed here two days. The weather was raw and chilly, and the temperature constantly fell to 8.2°. There was no spring as yet. But the wild-geese were on their migration, and when Tubges once shot a gander at a neighbouring brook, Oang Gye came to complain to me. He was quite overcome at this brutal murder, and could not conceive how my servant could be so heartless and cruel.

"You are right," I answered; "I am myself sorry for the wild-geese. But you must remember that we are travellers, and dependent for our livelihood on what the country yields. Often the chase and fishing are our only resources."

"In this district you have plenty of sheep."

"Is it not just as wrong to kill sheep and eat their flesh?"

"No!" he exclaimed, with passionate decision; "that is quite another matter. You surely will not compare sheep to wild-geese. There is as much difference between them as between sheep and human beings. For, like human beings, the wild-geese marry and have families. And if you sever such a union by a thoughtless shot, you cause sorrow and misery. The goose which has just been bereaved of her mate will seek him fruitlessly by day and night, and will never leave the place

where he has been murdered. Her life will be empty and forlorn, and she will never enter upon a new union, but will remain a widow, and will soon die of grief. A woman cannot mourn more deeply than she will, and the man who has caused such sorrow draws down a punishment on himself."

The excellent Oang Gye was quite inconsolable. We might shoot antelopes, wild sheep, and partridges as much as ever, if only we left the wild-geese in peace. I had heard in the Lob country similar tales of the sorrow of the swans when their union was dissolved by death. It was moving to witness Oang Gye's tenderness and great sympathy for the wild-geese, and I felt the deepest respect for him. Many a noble and sensitive heart beats in the cold and desolate valleys of Tibet.

CHAPTER LXIX

KAMBA TSENAM, FATHER OF THE ROBBERS

At the Namchen camp we bought a large supply of rice, meal, barley and *tsamba*, sugar, stearin candles, soap, and five hundred cigarettes,—all procured from Tsongka. A rich merchant, Ngutu, who owned fifty horses and mules and two hundred yaks, sold us two mules and a horse, besides cloth for new garments, boots, and caps. Abdul Kerim hastened to make me a Tibetan costume of fine Lhasa cloth; on my head I wore a Chinese silk cap swathed with a red turban; I stalked about in silk Chinese boots, and had an elegant sword in my girdle. In my Ladaki saddle with its variegated fittings, and riding a milk-white stallion, I looked in this makeshift outfit quite like a Tibetan of rank.

Here a large meeting was held in Dorche Tsuen's tent, where the question of my return route was discussed. Dorche Tsuen insisted on the necessity of my crossing the Samye-la again, and I answered, as before, that I intended to take no other way than over a pass east of the Samye-la. Then he appealed to the nomads at hand, who no doubt had received their instructions beforehand, and they all affirmed that the Chang-tang could be reached by no other pass than the Samye-la. However, we had heard from the horse-driver on the Gebuk-la that a way led over the mountains directly north of Kamba Tsenam's tent. But then the nomads, who would have to let us yaks on hire, replied that the road was so bad that we could not reach the Tarok-tso in three months, and that, for their part, they would not let their yaks go, and come to grief on the detritus of the pass. Then we offered to buy

yaks, but found no one who would sell his animals. After Dorche Tsuen had informed me that those who travelled from Saka into Bongba with hired yaks had to change both men and pack animals at Buptö on the upper Buptsang-tsangpo, I proposed to divide my caravan into two sections, one of which, under Abdul Kerim, would cross the Samye-la, while I with the other half marched over the eastern pass; we would meet on the lower course of the Buptsang-tsangpo. Ngutu, a genial old man of Mongolian origin, supported me, giving it as his opinion that it was of no consequence which pass I crossed myself, provided that the main part of the caravan went over the Samye-la; but Dorche Tsuen was still obstinate, and tried to frighten me with a tale of ten well-armed robbers whose haunts were in the country north of the mountain I wished to pass over.

"If the country is unsafe," I returned, "it is your duty to provide me with an escort of ten soldiers."

"The soldiers belong to the garrison of Saka-dzong, and cannot be employed elsewhere."

"Listen to me, Dorche Tsuen, and do not be so short-sighted. If you give me ten soldiers, you will be able to control my movements. I will pay them 2 rupees a man per day for their services, that is 20 rupees a day altogether. You can well believe that I cannot afford such a great expense for a long time, and therefore you will have a guarantee that I shall not take a long roundabout way. When I have rejoined Abdul Kerim's party I shall be beyond the limits of your province, and the escort can return."

"That is true," exclaimed two voices in the crowd; "if he pays 20 rupees a day he cannot go far."

Dorche Tsuen rose and called some of the other men to a consultation outside the tent, and when he came back again he said that I might have my wish, if I would sign a written declaration that I took upon myself all responsibility for the consequences, for he wished to be free from blame if any misfortune befell me. Of course I promised to sign such a document with pleasure.

Thus the matter was arranged. Nima Tashi, a powerful man of pleasant aspect, and dressed in a loose sheepskin, was to be chief of the bodyguard, and as he said he did not know the road to the north, Panchor, a man fifty-five years of age, was ordered to act as guide. He was called into the tent. I had not seen him before, but Abdul Kerim said that he was the same man who on April 23 had shown us the way to the foot of the Kinchen-la, and that he had seen me and Muhamed Isa last year in Saka-dzong. He was a little, thin, wiry man who had killed eighty yaks with the gun he always carried. To everything that was said to him he agreed submissively with "La lasso, la lasso." We could see that he was sly and knavish—just the stuff we wanted.

With him and all the other company we rode on May 4 over the pass Gara-la, and from its rather flat threshold saw Kamba Tsenam's tent still in the same place. Here we crossed, then, our route of April 22, and had made a loop round the snowy massive Chomo-uchong.

Panchor was the elder brother of Kamba Tsenam, and it struck me as curious that when the Governor of Saka pitched his tent beside that of the wealthy nomad, the latter did not come out to welcome him. Now a collection of tents had sprung up in the valley larger than at any of the foregoing camps. Couriers and messengers came and went, small yak caravans came up to the tents with provisions for the officials, and nomads had come in from the neighbourhood to have a look at the eccentric European who had come down like a bomb into the country and had been caught at last.

Late in the evening Kamba Tsenam came sneaking into my tent. He was very mysterious, and said that the Governor and his people had no notion that he was paying me a visit in the darkness. He wished only to say that Panchor could very well contrive that I should go almost anywhere I liked. The escort had strict orders from the authorities, but only Panchor knew the way, and could easily throw dust into the eyes of the other men. I had only to make my wishes known to Panchor and he would manage the rest. If also a band of fifty robbers

swept down on us like a whirlwind, they would disperse like sheep as soon as they knew that Panchor with his never-failing gun was with us. Kamba Tsenam thus revealed himself as a cunning rogue, who had not the slightest respect for the authorities of Saka. The old fool promised I that should travel by the roads I wished if, in return, I would contrive that he should be governor of Saka. What he said was only idle talk, and he himself was a fellow to be on our guard against. There was not a man in Bongba who had ever heard of him, and his great power existed only in his own imagination. In his own village he was known and flattered on account of his great wealth, and he boasted that no robber dared to touch his flocks, for he was their trusted friend. "I am the father of all the robbers," he said modestly.

I willingly accepted his invitation to visit his tent next morning. When I had passed it the first time it was in a snowstorm, and I had looked upon it as a serious menace to my plans and my freedom. Almost like a thief in the night, expecting to be discovered every moment, I had stolen past the black nomad dwelling. Now I approached it as an honoured guest, only barked at by dogs.

The huge tent, made of a number of pieces of material, is supported by three veritable masts, firmly fixed in the ground. A stone wall runs along the inner side, and in front of it are heaps of *tsamba*, rice, and corn sacks. Baskets and boxes stand full of clothing. The altar, a wooden shelf and a table are laden with *gaos*, images, votive bowls, praying mills, and holy books. In one corner stand perhaps a dozen guns with streamers on their rests, and in another as many swords. On the hearth, built on the left of the entrance, always stands a large tea-kettle boiling, ready for any guests that may come in. A battery of wooden cups stands on a stone slab ready for use. The bluish-grey smoke rises up towards the chimney opening. Far away from the entrance, at the right corner, the master of the house has his seat of honour, a small divan with a stool table before it, and before this again a fireplace, like a hollow cracked cannon-ball, filled with reeking dung embers. Some

of Kamba Tsenam's shepherds are sitting in a group drinking tea, in another part some small black children are playing, and in a third the women of the tent are tittering. With pure white short hair, wrinkled like crushed parchment, stone-blind, and dressed like Monna Vanna only in a cloak, Kamba Tsenam's eighty-three-year-old mother sits on her bed and swings her prayer-mill with the right hand, while her left hand keeps the beads of her rosary in constant motion. She prattles and murmurs prayers, sometimes drops her rosary to catch a troublesome insect, and sometimes lets the prayer-mill stop when she is plunged in vague dreamy thought. Twice she asked if the European were still there and if he had been offered tea and food.

May 5, the last day we enjoyed Dorche Tsuen's society, had to be celebrated in some way. I invited the whole party to a festival in the camp. The two Governors and Oang Gye took their places in my tent, in the middle of which our tea-cups were filled on an improvised table. The day had been cold and muggy and snow fell, but we warmed our hands over the fire, and sat wrapped in skin coats like four Tibetans of rank, while the populace formed a circle outside. A fire was lighted in the middle and was maintained by dung from four sacks. It was pitch dark outside, but yellow flames threw a bright gleam over the dark Tibetans, servants, herdsmen, nomads and soldiers, women and children, youths and old men. They stood in wondering groups in their skin coats blackened by the smoke of fires, bare-headed, with long black tresses hanging over their shoulders. The light from the fire made a vain attempt to gild them. They stood out in sharp effective relief against the deep shadows.

I charged Abdul Kerim to do his very best, and he informed me that the programme would contain fifteen items, song and dance following alternately without a pause. The first item was a dance with sticks to represent swords; the second, a hunting episode: a wild animal, composed of two crouching men with a piece of felt over them and two sticks for horns, went prancing round the fire; a hunter with his

gun crept about, took aim at the monster, killed him with a single shot, and performed with his friends a triumphal dance around the carcase. Then followed a Ladaki dance, little Gulam leading the troop, and after that Suerf executed his remarkable dance before a lady, represented by a stick he held before him. All the others kept time by clapping their hands, and invited the Tibetans to join in, and my guests in the tent were convulsed with laughter.

The Mohammedans executed a Yarkand dance with Kutus as leader. They danced round the fire, swinging their arms and skirts, and between the fire and the tent they appeared only as black profiles, while on the other side they were lighted up by the reddish-yellow flames, and their perspiring faces shone like bronze. A song followed, waking a sonorous echo in the mountains, and the Tibetans recognizing the air joined in, and all the while the men clapped their hands. The smoke from the fire took part in the dances and sometimes flew right in the faces of the spectators, the singing became louder, the merriment more uncontrolled, and the nomads laughed till they had to support themselves with their hands on their knees, as Suen revolved in grotesque pirouettes over the arena and the nomads tried to imitate him. The clumsy Abdullah performed an indescribable dance with his back bent back, and when he bent himself so much that he fell backwards to the edge of the fire, the delight of the spectators was unbounded: they laughed till they were breathless, hopped about and uttered wild yells, while the performer shook the sparks from his coat and retired to his corner. The Tibetans evidently enjoyed themselves; perhaps they had never had such an amusing evening in their lives. Dorche Tsuen said something of the sort. Ngavang gave way to his kindly laugh, and Oang Gye enjoyed the unwonted spectacle like a child. For my part, I dreamed awhile and thought of the unexpected and singular manner in which fate had allowed me to choose my course. Through the clouds of smoke I seemed to see all old Asia before me, and the adventures of past years behind me. A carnival of old camp-scenes danced before my mind's eye,

expiring like shooting-stars in the night—merry songs which came to an end among other mountains and the dying sound of strings and flutes. And I was surprised that I had not had enough of these things and that I was not tired of the light of camp-fires.

The wind rises, the snow falls thickly and hisses in the fire, and the flakes are lighted up from below. With white hair and shoulders the Tibetans look like mist figures, and behind them hang the dark curtains of night, from which is heard from time to time a pony's neigh or a dog's bark. The last sack of fuel is emptied over the leaping flames, burns up and sinks, and only embers are left, glowing in the ceaselessly falling snow. Then my grateful guests rise at midnight, distribute gifts to the performers, say farewell, and vanish like ghosts in the darkness to seek their own tents. Now night reigns alone over the valley, the surroundings lie silent and still, and only the pelting snow makes a swishing sound against the tent.

On the morning of May 6 the country was again white as in the depth of winter. Quietly and lightly as cotton-wool the flakes fell, and all, the Tibetans included, were more wrapped up than usual. The Governors and their retinue came to pay a farewell visit, and then I went out with them to their horses, took a last farewell, and thanked them for all the kindness they had shown me in spite of the trouble I had given them. Dorche Tsuen expressed a hope that we should meet again. It is much easier to get on with men and lead them where you wish if you treat them kindly and gently; you gain nothing by violence, harshness, and threats. The Governor was a fine upright figure on his horse; his face was entirely covered with dark spectacles and a red hood to protect it from the blast. His troop of mounted men was considerably diminished after his escort had been told off to follow me. They struck their heels into their horses and soon disappeared up the hill on the way to the Gara-la.

My caravan was now to be divided into two parties. Only five men were to follow me, namely, Gulam, Lobsang, Kutus,

Tubges, and Kunchuk. We had eight goats to supply milk; our old sheep had been sold for a mere trifle. A hundred rupees for the first five days were paid in advance to the escort under Nima Tashi. No agreement was made with Panchor, but he was to be paid well if he took me where I wished. The other seven Ladakis were ordered to proceed under the command of Abdul Kerim over the Samye-la to the Buptsang-tsangpo, follow the stream slowly downwards, and wait for us near its mouth in the Tarok-tso. Whatever they did, they were not to leave the Buptsang-tsangpo, or we might lose one another. Rindor and Pemba Tsering were deputed to follow them over the Samye-la to Buptö, to bring the Kebyang people to reason if they refused transport animals. My baggage was reduced to a minimum, and I took with me only a thousand rupees. Abdul Kerim was responsible for the remainder of the cash. He was an honest man, but a noodle. Some nomads accompanied us with six yaks for the baggage.

Though, according to our plans, we were to be separated only a few weeks, the parting was touching, and many childish tears trickled down weather-beaten cheeks. We had bought more horses, and all my five Ladakis could ride. We rode up the valley in close order; the bottom was full of loose rotten ice, lumpy tufts of grass with mice-holes among them, frozen springs, and detritus of hard green schist. We marched north-eastwards, and then due west, over the small double pass Shalung-la, and down to the Gyegong valley, where we encamped at Kamba Tsenam's sheepfolds to buy some sheep for food. The escort had got there first, and sat in their black tent drinking tea.

We sat talking with Kamba Tsenam and Panchor when a tall and strongly-built young fellow came and sat down at the opening of my tent.

"I have seen the Bombo before," he said, "in the neighbourhood of Nakchu. You had a Buryat and a lama with you. That is seven years ago."

"Quite right. Have you brought me a message?"

"No; I only wish to ask if you are disposed to buy two

good yaks from me. You can have them for half their value."

"Thanks; we do not want any yaks now. What is your occupation?"

"Robber!" he answered, without blinking.

After he had gone, Kamba Tsenam informed me that some time ago the man had killed a nomad in Rukyok, and now was come to treat about the compensation for the murder. The authorities were looking eagerly for the band to which he belonged, and Kamba Tsenam and Panchor knew exactly where they were hiding, but would not betray them lest they should be robbed of their property in revenge. Kamba Tsenam and his brother were evidently on very confidential terms with the robbers of the country, and I very much suspected that they were in league with some of them. In Panchor we had certainly an actual robber chief as guide. He himself told us that the Devashung had tried to engage him in their service as a spy and guide, when they wished to track up an evaded robber band, but he would not consent. He knew we had a large quantity of money with us, and we were not too safe in his company. He could very well arrange a night attack and in the end play the innocent. He pretended not to know the country beyond a couple of days' journey to the north, but when he inspected our six horses he said: "This one you bought from an old nomad to the west of Sha-kangsham, and this one from Tsongpun Tashi." If he knew every horse in the country, he must also know the country very well. I asked him to go over the names of our camping-places to the north, but he gave only the first two, and added: "The rest you will know as you go on, and if I cannot find them myself, there will always be some robbers I can ask."

On May 7 we took leave of the old robber chief Kamba Tsenam, and rode in close order up to the pass Gyegong-la, which has a height of 18,012 feet. The pass stands on a distinctly marked chain, which is called Kanchung-gangri, and it was very interesting to find that all the water on the northern side of the pass flowed to the upper Chaktak-tsangpo. Kan-

chung-gangri is therefore not part of the main range of the Trans-Himalaya, and the Gyegong-la is only a secondary pass. The great watershed lay some days' journey farther to the north.

On the northern side we passed a warm spring, Memo-chutsen, which at the orifice had a temperature of 93.6°, while in another the water boiled and steamed. The springs are surrounded by sinter, terraces, and basins in which sick people bathe.

Panchor had an old field-glass and diligently looked out for robbers and wild yaks. He said that we ought always to keep together in case we were attacked by robbers he did not know, and he bade us help with our weapons in the defence.

The camp this day was No. 400.

CHAPTER LXX

THE SEVENTH CROSSING OF THE TRANS-HIMALAYA—TO THE HEAVENLY LAKE OF THE THRONE MOUNTAIN

TWENTY-NINE degrees of frost on the night of May 8. Winter instead of spring might be coming. A month ago it was much warmer in Bongbà. But now we are mounting up to the heights of the Trans-Himalaya, the weather is cold, raw, and windy, the temperature seldom above freezing-point, and to-day the whole country is again buried in snow.

We ride northwards and descend from a small saddle to the Chaktak-tsangpo, near which we have to halt a while to warm ourselves at a fire. The river bends to the west-south-west to break through Kanchung-gangri. On its bank is seen a tent, eight horses, and a hundred sheep. Panchor went off to-day to stalk a herd of ninety wild yaks, and Nima Tashi, the captain of the bodyguard, was sure that a robber band was in the tent, for no nomads are seen in this cold country. The escort, particularly Nima Tashi, were dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Panchor had told us that we could make them go anywhere by frightening the soldiers with robbers. When Panchor appeared again, he said that the suspected tent was really inhabited by the band which had the murder in Rukyok on its conscience, and he added that if the people in Rukyok would not let the matter rest, the band threatened to commit new crimes in the country. I asked why the authorities did not seize the chief now when he was so near, but Panchor shook his head and said that if he was taken and killed, thirty others would be down on the country, and that

would be worse. A bandit's life in Tibet is on the whole a very pleasant one.

Following the stream upwards we came to the small lake Lapchung-tso, entirely covered with ice, and set up camp 401 (17,037 feet) on its eastern shore. It is enclosed among hills and surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains. To the south Kanchung-gangri appears in all its splendour. The snow is much more abundant on its northern than on its southern side, and in the hollows between its summits three large and several small glaciers, short and steep, are seen. From all the valleys on the north, north-west, and north-east brooks descend to the Lapchung-tso, and from the southern extremity of the lake the Chaktak-tsangpo issues, and a little distance farther south-west breaks through Kanchung-gangri.

May 9. −0.9° at this time of year! We move north-eastwards along the eastern shore of Lapchung-tso, and follow a well-beaten road consisting of quite fifty parallel paths. It is very interesting to draw another line on the map of Tibet through a part unknown before. Here travel the merchants whose destination is east Bongba and Chokchu, and here passes a large part of the salt traffic from Tabie-tsaka, as well as pilgrims on their way home from Kang-rinpoche. The last usually follow the *tasam* on their outward journey, but return by the northern route—that is, that the whole pilgrimage may make a *kore* or a loop of salvation.

Our direction becomes now more northerly and we go up the Sangmo-bertik valley, where the bottom is filled with ice clear as glass, but there is good pasturage on the flanks. The country is quite flat between Kanchung-gangri and the main crest of the Trans-Himalaya. In the longitudinal valley between the two we see to the north, 60° W., the comparatively low saddle Dicha-la, which is, however, a watershed of the first rank, for it parts the water flowing to the ocean from the isolated drainage of the plateau. Over the Dicha-la runs the lately mentioned road to the Buptsang-tsangpo and Tabie-tsaka. North, north-west, and north-east are several *gangris* with firn-fields and snow, all belonging to the main range of

the Trans-Himalaya. To the east lies a pass, the Nakbo-kongdo-la, with the Nakbo-gongrong-gangri; over this pass, which also seems to lie on the main watershed, a road runs to Targo-gangri and Dangra-yum-tso. Between Raga-tasam and Ombo a road crosses the Tsalam-nakta-la, mostly frequented by salt caravans. From camp 402 we could still see Chomo-uchong to the south, 13° E.

A member of the robber band we saw the day before paid us a visit and was evidently an old friend of Panchor. He gave us many interesting details of the Teri-nam-tso and Mendong-gompa, which were afterwards found to be perfectly correct. I never could make out Panchor. Either he was in league with the devil himself, or he was a fully fledged knave at his own risk and reckoning. He now assured me that it would be the easiest thing in the world to take me to the Teri-nam-tso and perhaps also to the Dangra-yum-tso. O gods of Naktsang, slumber in this cold spring and do not warn your earthly vassals until it is too late! Yes, if I could only contrive to cross the Trans-Himalaya twice more, I would then willingly leave this mighty range to rest a thousand years under a veil of clouds and glittering snowfields. It is strange that this wide country, so near to the Indian frontier, should have remained absolutely unknown till our late times. I am proud and delighted to know that I am the first white man to penetrate to this wilderness.

Panchor advised us to stay a day in the valley, for we should not find pasture as good as here for a long time. I wondered how he could know that, seeing that he had said recently that he had never been north of the Sangmo-bertik-la.

On the night of May 11 the thermometer fell to 3°. We found ourselves in a great enlargement of the Trans-Himalaya called Lap, and this region is noted for its severe climate. Even in the middle of summer, when it is warm everywhere else, it is cold in Lap. The ice breaks up on Lapchung-tso only in the beginning of June after all the other ice is melted. From the map it is seen that many considerable rivers, flowing north and south, take their rise in this lofty swell.

The day's march took us up to higher ground, and the way was dreadful—not a road at all, but a track winding among granite boulders and yak-moss. And next day it was still worse. In raw wintry weather, with a temperature of 1.2°, we wound up the ascent extremely slowly, where all small and loose material had been removed, so that the animals might at any moment break their legs among the stones. Here no other vegetation was seen but a moss, yellow as the yolk of an egg, and another shading into red. On the left we passed three small glaciers with a blue tinge on their fronts. By one of them some wild yaks walked meditatively. The weather was so cold that we had to stop frequently to warm our hands at a small dung fire. Panchor insisted strongly on these halts "in order that the Bombo may not be tired"; but I suspect it was chiefly because he wanted a puff from his Chinese *gansa*.

Though it was a great struggle for our horses, we came at last to the Sangmo-bertik-la, at the giddy height of 19,094 feet, and now I stood for the seventh time on the main crest of the Trans-Himalaya and the watershed of the great Indian rivers. The view was closed in on all sides and limited by adjacent heights. On a sharp ridge to the north-west seven yaks were tramping in the snow. Panchor and one of the soldiers went on foot in pursuit of them—to mount these steep hills on foot and carry heavy, clumsy guns is tough work. We rode on among the granite boulders; lower down green porphyry begins. The gradient became more gentle, and where we encamped we could scarcely perceive in which direction the valley sloped.

The day had been stormy, and the blast continued on May 13. Little Puppy went out to look at the morning, but crept back again and lay on his mat. Takkar was still irreconcilable towards his countrymen, the Tibetans, and inspired the greatest respect in all the escort and Panchor. We rode on through the valley northwards, past numerous summer camping-grounds, and recognized the characteristic low relief of Chang-tang in contrast to the more deeply excavated valleys on the

southern side of the Trans-Himalaya. At the mouth of a side-valley running in from the west the escort came to a halt, and Nima Tashi explained that our road to Buptö, where we had agreed to meet Abdul Kerim's party, ran up this valley, and that they did not intend to go farther north. They now showed their teeth for the first time, and were not so pliant as we thought. They excused themselves on the ground that their yaks were tired, that their provisions were at an end, and that they had no orders to accompany us more than fourteen days. Panchor, the scoundrel, took their part, and frightened us with the chief of Bongba-chushar, who took tribute from all the robbers of the country, and would certainly plunder us if we passed through his domain. After long consideration we decided to camp where we were, to thoroughly discuss the situation. Before the sun had set I had won them over, though it was chiefly the chink of silver rupees which made them forget all their scruples. It was agreed that they should receive their 20 rupees every evening, and I gave them a goat in addition, as their supply of meat was at an end.

So on May 14 we rode farther north in blinding snow, and passed numerous *manis*, nine standing in one row. The valley became more open, and was more than a mile broad. We found no water at the camp, but two of our yaks were laden with blocks of ice. Every evening we sat an hour conversing with Panchor, and it was easy to check his statements. I told him once for all, that if he did not speak the truth he would receive no extra gratuity. In the evening he declared that there were dreadful apparitions at Muhamed Isa's grave, and that at night fearful shrieks and groans could be heard from beneath. He was quite convinced that spirits and demons haunted the grave, and said that no Tibetan ventured to go near the place; this was well, for consequently the grave would not be desecrated.

He gave me also much valuable information about the country round Nam-tso or Tengri-nor, where he was born. He had gone twice round Nam-tso, thrice round Tso-mavang, and twelve times round Kang-rinpoche, which he intended

to visit again soon, to complete the thirteenth circuit of salvation. He considered it superfluous to make the circuit of Dangra-yum-tso and Targo-gangri, for he had already tramped so far that all his sins must be forgiven, and he was sure of promotion in the next incarnation. Panchor had not the slightest doubt that a man or horse which had drunk of the water of Tso-mavang or Nam-tso was for ever immune from illness, robbers, and wolves. "It is just as though a fire blazed out of that part of the body where the wolf intends to seize him," he affirmed. But he considerably modified his statements after I had told him that we had a mule which had drunk for a whole month of the water of Tso-mavang and yet had been torn in pieces by wolves at Gartok. "Yes," he replied, "the protection is only for Tibetans and their animals, not for Europeans and their animals. And if the wolf itself drank of the holy water it would avail nothing; he would still seize his prey."

On the 15th of May we set out again in a snowstorm, whereas I had been looking forward ever since January to spring. It caused great merriment, both among the Tibetans and the Ladakis, when one of the escort who did not know Kunchuk's name, spoke of him as "that there calf." We had travelled a good long way before they ceased to laugh at the newly invented title, which stuck to Kunchuk ever after.

The valley opens out on to a plain where kiangs, Goa and Pantholops antelopes are plentiful. From the ridge of a hill we see to the east another still larger plain, beyond which Targo-gangri would be visible if the mountain were not shrouded in clouds and falling snow. Buchu-tso is a small pool which dries up in summer. There lay three black tents, and beyond another hill in the locality Kangmar, seven. When we encamped, sixty men, women, and children came out and watched us. They had gathered together here to pay their taxes to a collector from Saka. The district is called Bongba-chushar, and the elderly gova came to visit us. He was a discreet man and put no awkward questions. Panchor, who was accustomed to run with the hare and hunt with the

hounds, had probably given him an account of us beforehand. It seems he was terribly frightened, for he had never in his life seen a European. However, he gave us much valuable information about the country, among other things, that the little twin lakes Mun-tso lay to the north of the Barong-la and east of the Teri-nam-tso, not south of the Dangra-yum-tso as on Nain Sing's map, which I had myself found to be incorrect. On the way to the Teri-nam-tso we should be able in two places to steal goose eggs; it was forbidden to the Tibetans for three years to take them, but a European could permit himself anything without having to answer for it to the gods of heaven and earth.

After a day's rest we marched north-north-east to the broad longitudinal valley of Soma-tsangpo. The river descends from the east-south-east, and probably has its source in the great mountain system we saw from the Shuru-tso. Here it runs west-north-west, but afterwards turns north and north-eastwards, and therefore makes a sharp curve before it enters the Teri-nam-tso. Its bed is flat and shallow, and at the time carried down about 280 cubic feet of water per second, but it is so full in summer that sometimes it cannot be forded. We camped at a spring in a valley at the farther side, and on May 18 ascended the adjacent pass, Dongchen-la, and on its south slopes twenty-four Ovis Ammon sheep were a fine sight.

On the night of the 19th, the minimum temperature was 29.5°, and now it felt as if spring were really come, or even summer. The way ran north-west up a steep valley, where granite and dark schists were twice observed *in situ*, to the small pass Teta-la (16,266 feet), where we had at length a free view over the longed-for lake Teri-nam-tso, Nain Sing's Tede-nam-tso, which he never visited nor saw, but only heard of, and inserted with a broken line quite correctly on his map. The only mistake he made was to draw the lake longer from north to south instead of from east to west.

To obtain an uninterrupted view we climbed up a height on the north side of the pass (16,972 feet). The scene here displayed in all directions was one of the grandest and most

most memorable tableaus I have seen in Tibet. The "heavenly lake" lay like a great flat-cut turquoise framed in mountains and hills shaded in pink, red, yellow, and purple, which, towards the horizon, gradually passed into a light blue veil. Only to the south-east quadrant is the view obstructed by adjacent heights belonging to the chain on the crest of which we stand, and which runs along the southern shore of the lake, but elsewhere the view is open, dizzy, boundless, and the eyes scan both Sha-kangsham's majestic peak and Targo-gangri's many-headed ridge, and the seven-times-mounted main range of the Trans-Himalaya, with its snow-crowned heights rising in a row of bright white domes to the south. Many other peaks and domes with eternal snow rise over this sea of tumbled waves, but, after all, the finest sight is the lake itself, which charms and fascinates the spectator by its intense ultra-marine hue, a couple of shades deeper and stronger than turquoise. When one first comes to the saddle of the pass and this wealth of colouring strikes the retina, one can scarcely restrain an exclamation of astonishment and admiration. We look down straight on the lake, and its southern shore is just below us. To the west it extends for two days' journey, and widens out enormously, while to the east it contracts and seems to stretch a good day's journey. Due north-east the blue surface is broken by a steep rocky islet, with a level shore only in the east, and farther east one fancies one can detect the hollow where the basin of the Dangra-yum-tso skirts the northern foot of the divine Targo-gangri mountain.

Beautiful weather, not a cloud on the blue vault of heaven, calm and quiet, only the gentlest whisper over the hills sounding in the ears like the tinkle of small bells and the vibration of strings. One feels overwhelmed by this grand beauty, which speaks more powerfully to the senses than the high mass of any archbishop. I stood several hours up here and made a hopeless attempt to sketch the landscape, but succeeded in producing only a feeble imitation of the reality. From the Teta-la one commands a very considerable area of

the heart of Tibet. How extensive is the line of Sha-kangsham! How many are the points from which I have viewed this wonderful mountain on different journeys! Like a gigantic beacon, a marvellous landmark, it raises its snow-covered dome above desolate Tibet. And we were far from its dripping glaciers when for the last time it sank below the horizon like a dream of snow and roses.

At last we had to drag ourselves away and follow the track of the other men to a little dreary valley where they had encamped near a couple of tents. Even here the view was remarkable. How I now missed my old tried boat, and how gladly I would have glided with sail and oar over the heavenly lake!

We remained four whole days at this miserable camp with its fine view (15,646 feet). The fact was that Dangra-yum-tso now for the fourth time began to haunt my dreams, and as the holy lake was only four days' journey to the east, I would try to reach its shore. But Nima Tashi and Panchor put all kinds of difficulties in the way: their yaks would perish where there was no grazing, and it was impossible to hire yaks, for all had lately gone to Tabie-tsaka for salt. I proposed to go on my own horses, and meet them at Mendong-gompa after the excursion, and to this they made no objection at first. If I had not been by this time heartily sick of Tibet, I would have played them a pretty trick, and gone not only to Dangra-yum-tso, but further eastwards until I was stopped. But I was weary of geography, discoveries, and adventures, and wanted to get home. And besides, on comparing the lands east and west of the Teri-nam-tso, I considered the latter far better worth visiting The former I had traversed by three routes, and two other travellers had been there, but no one had been in the west, and we knew nothing about it except the uncertain data which the Jesuits had gathered from the natives two hundred years ago. In fact this land was the least known part of Tibet, and the road to the Nganglaring-tso crosses the blank patch in its longer direction. If the authorities had asked me which way I would choose, I should have answered,

the way to the Nganglaring-tso. It would have been wisest to close at once with Nima Tashi's suggestion to go straight to Mendong-gompa. But their opposition egged me on to break another lance for Dangra-yum-tso. I ought to have remembered that he who grasps at all loses all, for I was within an ace of losing Mendong-gompa into the bargain.

For when Nima Tashi saw that he could not make me give way, he secretly sent a message to Tagla Tsering, the chief of Sangge-ngamo-buk, the district we were in and which is subject to Naktsang. And Tagla Tsering came. Last year he had been in Lundup's train when the latter had stopped us at the foot of Targo-gangri and prevented us from going to the shore of the holy lake. Now he looked very grand and important. Over a mantle of panther skin he wore a belt of six bright silver *gaos*, and in the belt was stuck a sword with a silver scabbard inlaid with turquoise and coral, and at his side rattled knives and other pendent articles Over all, he wore a long reddish-violet mantle, and on his head a Chinese silk cap. He was accompanied by six horsemen, and, the day after, twenty more arrived, all armed to the teeth with guns, swords, and lances; all in picturesque bright-coloured costumes, some with tall brimmed hats on their heads, others with bandages round their foreheads. Tagla Tsering evidently took the matter seriously, and tried to get over me by talking of raising the militia.

The powerful chief meanwhile entered my tent, friendly and pleased, and, like an old friend, bade me heartily welcome, and expressed his great astonishment that I had come back again, though I had been forced the year before to turn back. Had I not already brought about Hlaje Tsering's fall, and would I cause the new Governor of Naktsang to meet the same fate? Or what did I mean?

"No, Hedin Sahib, you cannot travel to Naktsang. Turn to the west. Nima Tashi had no authority to lead you even to the Teri-nam-tso; it was on the Buptsang-tsangpo you were to meet the caravan. You talk of Mendong-gompa. You

have no right to travel thither. There is a nearer way to the rendezvous. Mendong-gompa does not lie in my district, but all the same I have sent written notices to all the govas in the country to stop you if you travel to the monastery."

Poor Nima Tashi was half dead with fright. He had thought to frighten me, but now he saw that the chief and I sat together like old friends, drinking tea and smoking cigarettes, while he was reprimanded for bringing me too far. I told him afterwards that he was a noodle, and if he now got into trouble in Saka it was his own fault. Tagla Tsering's good humour was much enhanced when I promised to turn back and conform to the arrangements of the chiefs on the way to Mendong, if by any chance I was prevented from approaching the convent.

We said farewell on May 24, and continued our journey westwards along the southern shore of the lake. The water is salt and has an extremely unpleasant taste, and cannot be drunk in any circumstances. Lamlung-la (16,880 feet) is a commanding pass, which must be crossed to cut off a peninsula. The rocks are granite and green schist. Hares and wild-geese are very plentiful. Here and there are fresh-water lagoons on the shore, which forms a very narrow belt at the foot of the mountains. The northern shore belt seems to be much broader. We followed the southern shore another day to the spring Tertsi at the western extremity of the lake, which forms a large regular expansion.

I heard the name of this lovely lake variously pronounced by different nomads. Nain Sing's Tede-nam-tso is incorrect. The Gova of Kangmar insisted that Tsari-nam-tso was the correct pronunciation, and said that the name was bestowed because *ri di tsa-la tso yore*, that is, "The lake situated at the foot of the mountain." The nomads on the shore, however, said Tiri- or Teri-nam-tso. At our camp 411 were two small mountains on the shore, called Techen and Techung, or the Great and Little Te, or more correctly Ti. *Ti* is a lama's throne in a temple, *ri* signifies mountain, *nam* heaven, and *tso* lake. The whole name therefore has the poetical meaning

of the Throne-mountain's Heavenly Lake. Its height above sea-level is 15,367 feet, or 413 feet lower than Mont Blanc, which, if it lifted up its head from the turquoise billows of the lake, would look like the small rocky islet in its eastern half.

CHAPTER LXXI

ANOTHER JOURNEY ACROSS THE WHITE PATCH

We left on May 26 the heavenly lake, the shore of which had never before been trodden by European or Pundit, and saw its blue surface diminish to a sabre blade between the mountains, and finally disappear in the east, while we rode westwards over a wide plain, which was formerly under water. Kutus, Lobsang, and Panchor accompanied me. We must hasten to descend on the monastery before the monks got wind of us, and the caravan and escort could come after and encamp near Mendong-gompa. Panchor disappeared at the first tent we passed, and was not seen again all day. He was a coward, and did not wish to be suspected of showing us the way to the sanctuary. We had therefore to shift for ourselves and find our way thither.

Two men and a woman came out of a nomad encampment to the track we followed, and asked if we had seen the European who was said to be travelling about Bongba. In order to preserve my incognito till I came to Mendong, I answered that he was coming behind with his caravan, and if they kept on the look-out they would see an amusing figure. Probably they had long given up all hope of seeing the stranger. My involuntary disguise therefore did me good service, for the nomads took me to be, like the other two men, servants of the expected European.

Hour after hour we rode on westwards and looked in vain for a monastery. But at last it cropped up all of a suddeh. We were on the top of a bank terrace 30 feet high, skirting on

the east the channel of the Soma-tsangpo, and saw at the foot of the opposite terrace the quadrangular stone house of the monastery with its white walls and red frieze, *chhortens*, *mani* heaps, and streamers, and on the east and west of it two tent villages, the upper inhabited by sixty monks, the lower by forty nuns. The Soma-tsangpo, also called Nyagga, or Soma-Nyagga-tsangpo, now carried down 350 to 420 cubic feet of water, which, divided into four channels, glided over a treacherously deepening bottom. We managed, however, to ford it, and rode up to the gate of the monastery, where ten monks, good-natured but reserved, met us. I have no space to describe the religious organization of Mendong-gompa. It is enough to say that hitherto it was quite unknown even by name, like so many of the convents we visited the year before. The peculiarity of this monastery is that the brothers and sisters live in black tents, and every tent is a cell. The tents had a very comfortable and attractive appearance, but the sisters, of whom I took some portraits, were hideous to behold—old unwashed harpies, barbarous and demoralized. That there is anything idyllic and fascinating in life in a nunnery in the wilds is a pure illusion, which vanishes at once at the sight of these old apes. They have also a puzzling resemblance to their male colleagues, and it is often difficult to decide whether one of them is a man or a woman.

When we left the solitary monastery on May 28 we decided to make for the rendezvous on the Buptsang-tsangpo, where Abdul Kerim would no doubt be uneasy at our prolonged absence. It had been arranged that we should be separated only two weeks, but before we reached the river a whole month would have passed away.

So we set out early, followed the right bank of the Soma-tsangpo southwards, and crossed the range, from the top of which, at the Teta-la, we had first seen the Teri-nam-tso. The valley is quite 2½ miles broad, the strand terraces are well developed, the fall is slight, and the rush of water is seldom heard; here and there stands a tent with grazing flocks. One more sunrise and we ride through the river, which, with the

Sachu-tsangpo, Buptsang-tsangpo, and Bogtsang-tsangpo, shares the honour of being one of the largest in the interior of Tibet. Through the valley Goa-lung we rode up on May 30 to the pass Goa-la (19,382 feet), flat and easy, lying amidst pink and grey granite, and affording an instructive view over the Trans-Himalaya to the south. To the south-west we see, close below the pass, the small lake Karong-tso—a new discovery, like everything else in this country. Our route ran to the west, when we, on June 1, rode, with the Karong-tso on our left hand, and a crest of medium height on our right, through the district Bongba-kemar, following the great route of the salt caravans between Raga-tasam and Tabie-tsaka, which crosses the already-mentioned pass Tsalam-nakta-la. A highroad from Naktsang joins this. At camp 417 we had the Chunit-tso near us on the north-west.

Although we were at the beginning of June, the minimum sank below freezing-point; in the night of the 1st the thermometer fell to 16.3°. But the day was warm, nay hot, when the sun shone and the air was still. The dreary barren valleys lay waiting for the rainy season. The grass was more than scanty, for last summer the rains failed. Our direction turned more to the south-west. From camp 418 we saw, to the south, 60° E., the opening of a valley through which a highway runs through Bongba-kyangrang over the Dicha-la to Lapchung.

Our Tibetans know excellently well how to look after themselves on the journey. On the march they twist string, talk, sing and whistle, and shout at their yaks. In pitching their camp they set up their black tent in a moment, first stretching out the ropes and fastening them into the ground with wooden pegs, and then throwing the cloth over the poles. The animals are unloaded and sent off to feed, and the men gather fuel and make a fire in the tent, where all assemble to drink tea and sleep. After a couple of hours they come out again, wrestle, play and laugh. In the dusk one may be heard singing a monotonous ballad, which must, however, be amusing, for the others laugh heartily at every verse. Morning and evening they gabble their prayers, all together, murmuring like bees in

a hive. An old man, whom I knew the year before, has a riding yak of his own, and brandishes the escort's prayer-mill. He is never seen without this ingenious instrument. The men are always good-natured and polite, help us to collect fuel, set up the tents and load the animals, and frequently pay us a visit. We know them all by name and are the best of friends.

The temperature sank in the night only a few degrees below freezing-point, and yet a snowstorm raged almost all day long on June 3. We rode past a large marsh in the valley and up to the flat saddle Merke-sang, with a view over the plain we crossed exactly two months before on the way to the Buptsang-tsangpo. Camp 419 lay therefore in the Bongba-kebyang district again. To the south-east is the pass Chiptu-la, with the pilgrim route from Nakchu to Kang-rinpoche. To the south, 27° W., rises a snowy summit, at the foot of which a road leads over the Dsalung-la to Tradum. As a watershed this pass is of the first rank, and it sends off a voluminous tributary to the Buptsang-tsangpo. The escort sent off a messenger in advance to this river to look out for Abdul Kerim's party.

June 4. It had snowed all night long, and we set out in the wildest snowstorm. It was half dark, with heavy leaden clouds; not a glimpse could be seen of the surrounding mountains; all was wet, muddy, and evil-smelling; pools of melting snow lay on the ground, and seven pilgrims from Kang-rinpoche were close upon us before they emerged from the mist. We splashed through the soaked soil, but when we encamped on the shore of the Buptsang-tsangpo the weather was much clearer.

Before I proceed further I will mention that the great province of Bongba is divided into twelve *tso* or districts, namely: Parryang, Laktsang, Buptö, Tsaruk, Yeke, Tarok, Kebyang, Kemar, Parma, Changma, Kyangrang, and Chushar. To each of these district names is usually prefixed the name of the province, as, for instance, Bongba-parryang, Bongba-laktsang, etc. We were now in Bongba-kebyang.

Some tents stood on the river bank The nomads reported

that Abdul Kerim had gone a week before by a cross-cut over the mountain on the right, down towards the Tarok-tso. There was no Gova here, but two natives were ready to let us on hire the five yaks we required. They were shy and timorous, but Panchor, the rogue, spoke well of us, and it was agreed that they should accompany us to the boundary of Tarok-tso. On the morning of June 5 we took farewell of Nima Tashi and his soldiers and of Panchor, and rode between the hills on the left side of the valley down the course of the Buptsang-tsangpo. Soon the valley contracted to a ditch, but before long expanded again. On our left hand we had the main range of the Trans-Himalaya, which, however, did not present an imposing appearance, for we were always close to its foot. At times we were enveloped in a snowstorm, and at Mabie-tangsam-angmo, where we camped, we made haste to get a cover over our heads. When Little Puppy heard the thunder rumble for the first time in his life, he was very disturbed and barked with all his might, but he could not make out whence the noise came, and he found it safest to fly into the tent and hide himself behind my bed-head.

June 6. Hail and snow! The whole country is hidden under newly fallen snow, as far as we can see. Is June to be reckoned among the winter months? We have already had nine of them. It seems as though summer were missed out this year and we were approaching another winter. But the precipitation is welcome to the nomads, for it promotes the growth of fresh grass. We march sometimes on the top, sometimes at the foot of a lofty erosion terrace 80 to 100 feet high, which is a characteristic feature in this large valley. Geese, wild asses, Goa antelopes, and foxes are everywhere. A sharp bend in the river forces us to the north-north-east for a time, and the valley is again narrow and picturesque. At Tuta, which belongs to Bongba-tsaruk, we encamp close by the Buptsang-tsangpo, where the wild-geese swim with their yellow chicks in the clear water.

Eighteen degrees of frost on the night of June 7. Yet the day was fine, and flies, gnats, and other insects were more

numerous than before. As on the two preceding days we crossed several small affluents from the Trans-Himalaya. The Buptsang valley expanded more and more, and at length became 13 miles broad. We encamped in sight of the Tarok-tso, on a level plain about 16 feet above the surface of the lake, and with two nomad tents as our nearest neighbours. The height here was 15,197 feet.

Our guides were the pleasantest and most complacent we had ever had, our movements were not controlled by chiefs and soldiers, and Karma Puntso's camp was far away—we might have travelled wherever we liked. But the Buptsang-tsangpo and the Tarok-tso were the most interesting geographical features in Bongba, and now we saw the lake close in front of us.

Our plan was to make on June 8 for Lunkar-gompa, which was seen perched on its hill with a view over the lake. But it was not to be, for at six o'clock Gova Pensa arrived on horseback accompanied by two servants. He was dressed in a handsome blue cloak, looked about fifty-five years old, and greeted us in a kind and friendly manner. After a while came half a dozen more horsemen—evidently we were held up again. Gova Pensa asked us to remain where we were for the day, for Gova Parvang, the district chief of Tarok-shung, would come in the afternoon. He said it was impossible to see Lunkar-gompa, for both the head lamas, with most of the other twenty monks, were gone two days before to Kang-rinpoche, and had left the temple gates locked. Only four nuns and two monks had been left behind. Of Abdul Kerim's party he only knew that they had met Gova Parvang, but did not know where they were now.

Gova Parvang did not put in an appearance, but sent instead his lieutenant, old Yamba, and seventeen other unarmed men to my tent. Yamba had orders not to let us go to Tabie-tsaka if he valued his head. But he added that if we went there of our own accord and with our own horses he could not stop us, but yaks and provisions would not be supplied, and the nomads had orders to avoid us like the

plague. Would we, on the other hand, go up a valley which opened out to the south-south-west by which we could reach Tuksum in seven days over the Lungnak-la, he would let us hire yaks, would sell us provisions, and provide us with guides. Or if we would go over the Lunkar-la north-westwards to Selipuk, he would also do his best to serve us. He advised us to take the latter route, for he had been present when Gova Parvang forced Abdul Kerim to take the direct road to Selipuk between the Tarok-tso and Tabie-tsaka. We had, then, three different routes to choose from, which led over the blank space on the map of Tibet, where there are no other black lines but the meridians and parallels and the word "Unexplored." I did not take a minute to choose; the middle road over the Lunkar-la was naturally the most desirable, for I knew that it would yield me most details to complete my knowledge of the intricate orography of the Trans-Himalaya. On the morning of June 9 we hastily concluded our business, obtained yaks and guides, bought barley, rice, and *tsamba*, took farewell of the chiefs of Bongba-tarok, and steered our course direct to the temple. We passed several tent villages, for the country is densely peopled. At the foot of the mountain, on the left, a warm spring rises out of the ground. Below the monastery hill stand twenty small white stone cabins, each with a red frieze under the eaves and a small quadrangular yard. In front of the village are two *chhortens*, behind which two women with their children were hiding. While the caravan continued up the Lunkar valley, I, with Lobsang and Kutus, ascended the porphyry hill to the temple, which is surrounded by a quadrangular wall. Some savage dogs rushed upon us and snapped at Little Puppy, but there was no other sign of life. We went into the court and found the temple door closed, and fastened with a great iron lock. As I was sketching a panorama of the great beautiful lake and its wreath of mountains, six men came up and told us in an angry voice to go away. I rose up, went straight to the nearest of them, and, pointing to the path down to the village, told them that if they did not immediately make off they must put up with

the consequences. They turned round meekly without saying a word.

The lake stretches from north, 26° W., to north, 57° E., but extends further eastwards hidden behind a mountain. To the north-north-east two rocky islets are seen near the northern shore. To the north-east the Buptsang-tsangpo enters a bay, and in the far distance in the same direction our old Shakangsham appears. The water of the Tarok-tso is said to be sweet, but I had no opportunity of confirming this statement. If it is correct, the lake must have a subterranean outlet to the Tabie-tsaka lying to the north, though a small mountain offshoot lies between the two lakes.

We left the small inhospitable monastery and a couple of small white and red houses, where the nuns have their cells, and soon rejoined our men in the Lunkar valley.

In the night the temperature was above freezing-point for the first time. Our path ascended steeply to the south-west and south, and in three hours we were at the streamer-decked cairn on the Lunkar-la, where the height was 18,274 feet. From a height to the north-east of the pass the Tarok-tso lies below the spectator as on a map, and in the north from 20° to 26° E. is seen the white and yellow saline depression of Tabie-tsaka, renowned throughout Tibet. At Goang-shung we got three new guides with four yaks, who took us to the bank of the Gyenor- or Goang-tsangpo—a small river which, coming from the mountain Kapta in the south-east, falls into the Poru-tso. To the west rises a chain of mighty snowy peaks. On the morning of June 12, after 8.8 degrees of frost, the stream was covered with a third of an inch of ice, and I missed the pleasant rippling sound of the evening. But the ice broke up in the sunshine and rattled down in large flakes. We were conducted still to the south-west; on the next day when we encamped on the lake shore the direction was nearer west. From camp 428 (17,067 feet) we had a fine view over the small lake Poru-tso, also called Yeke-tso because it is situated in the district Bongba-yeke, the westernmost in the large province of Bongba, which is under the control of

Karma Puntso. To the west of it follows Rigi-hloma or Rigi-changmo, which is subject to Ngari-karpun, as the Garpun of Gartok is called here. Puru-tso is drying up; the highest shore-line lies 354 feet above the present level of the lake. The water is not fit for drinking, but, curiously enough, it still contains fish. An extremely disagreeable odour rises from the beach. The lake stretches from north-east to south-west.

On June 14 we rode westwards and crossed the broad valley watered by the Nyapohu-tsangpo, which, descending from the Men-la due south, falls into the Poru-tso. The Men-la, a day's journey off, is a pass in a longitudinal valley between two of the ranges of the Trans-Himalaya. Over its threshold a road runs to Shamsang on the upper Tsangpo. A day was spent on the bank of the Surle-tsangpo, which also flows to the Poru-tso, and in the evening carried quite 210 cubic feet of water per second.

Here I was waited on by Gova Pundar of Rigi-hloma, an elderly man, who gave me a *kadakh*, butter, meal, and milk, and sold us all the provisions we required for several days, and his goodwill knew no bounds. The people in this part of Tibet were always very friendly disposed. In the Lob country the natives called me Padishahim or "Your Majesty," a title that more than satisfied my ambition; but in Bongba and Rigi I was often called Rinpoche or "Your Holiness," which I thought a little too strong. But they meant well, and I accepted their civilities as the most natural thing in the world. Gova Pundar knew every inch of his country, and I pumped him thoroughly. Among other interesting details, he informed me that thirteen days' journey to the north, near the Lakkor-tso, was a monastery Marmik-gompa, a dependency of Sera, with twenty-five monks and four nuns. In the year 1901 I had been at the Lakkor-tso, and had heard the blast of the shell-horn at the other side of a ridge, but I did not enjoy the same freedom as now, and could not visit the monastery.

We rode on the 16th in a snowstorm, with fresh men and yaks, through the picturesque Surle valley, and on the 17th over stony moss-grown slopes to the pass Sur-la or Sur-la-Kemi-la,

19,134 feet high, which, like the Lunkar-la, is of the second order, for it is a divide between the Poru-tso and the Shovo-tso. Before reaching the actual pass we had a striking view west-south-west over a world of firn-fields, peaks clothed with eternal snow, and glaciers, one of which, of large dimensions and bluish green in front, with numerous moraines and rivulets, descends to the Surle river. Here grey granite predominates; wilds yaks are everywhere; the country is barren and of a high alpine character. On the other side of the Sur-la the ground descends rapidly among quantities of medium-sized granite boulders.

At camp 431 we were, then, in the district Rigi-changma. When we went on farther down the valley from the pass on June 18, we suddenly heard wild yells from a whole choir of four large and six small wolves, which were strolling along a slope immediately to the left of the path. They were greyish yellow, and seemed hungry and in a very vicious humour. Takkar rushed heedlessly at them, but they faced him, and he thought it better to turn back. They showed no signs of fear, but held their ground even when we threw stones at them. At that moment two horsemen with weapons and red hats came down from the Sur-la. They were pursuivants sent out in advance to Selipuk to make preparations for the arrival of the *serpuns*, or gold commissioners. These gentlemen are sent annually from Lhasa to Tok-jalung, and their journey is burdensome to the nomads, for they exact pack animals and food without payment. They take the road north of the Teri-nam-tso and Tabie-tsaka, which is one of Tibet's great arteries. It is called the Ser-lam, or the "gold road."

Over a small saddle we came to the Pedang-tsangpo's valley, 6½ miles broad, which starts from the Trans-Himalayan pass Pedang-la, and runs almost due north. Camp 432 was pitched on the river bank in a place quite devoid of life. Our guides wished to turn back with their yaks, but were persuaded to accompany us to the nearest tent village. What could the Tibetans be thinking of? They left us without the slightest supervision, and we enjoyed more freedom than ever before.

We could now have travelled anywhere we liked, eastwards to Tabie-tsaka or southwards over the Trans-Himalaya; but the lakes in the north had most attraction for me, and we should have to cross the lofty mountains in the south at some time.

CHAPTER LXXII

THE LAST DAYS IN UNKNOWN COUNTRY

ON June 19 we proceeded north-north-east down the Pedang-tsangpo's gently declining valley, sometimes near, sometimes at a distance from, the fairly large river. On the right was the ridge of the Sur-la with its snowy summits and small glacier tongues, and far in the north was seen a huge crest called Ganglung-gangri, a prolongation of the Sur-la. We found that this colossal range, like its eastern and western neighbours, runs from north-north-west to south-south-east, and that the orographical configuration is totally unlike the scheme set forth by Hodgson, Atkinson, Saunders, and Burrard, for these gentlemen, quite hypothetically, inserted a single chain parallel to the upper Brahmaputra. In reality one wanders here in a labyrinth of mountain ranges, one and all only parts of the gigantic system of the Trans-Himalaya.

The road was excellent, and after a long ride we set up our two tents on the bank of a glacier stream while snow squalls and showers of pelting rain came down alternately. Here we had to stay a day, that the genial nomads of the neighbourhood might send for the district chief; for we had nothing to eat, but had to buy whatever we could get. He came, and we bought provisions for 50 rupees, and gave him 20 for his kindness. Our treasury was almost empty, and I looked forward with trembling to the time when we should be obliged, like wandering Jews, to sell watches, revolvers, and horses to gain a livelihood. For here, in Rigi-changma, no one had heard of Abdul Kerim and his men. We could not tell what had happened.

Had he gone quite off his head? He had 2500 rupees with him; had he decamped, or had he been robbed? A letter was despatched to Gova Parvang saying that if he did not get news of them in a week he would have all the Devashung and the Mandarins about his ears. At any rate we had made a splendid journey through unknown country, and now we must make our way to the Shovo-tso we had long heard spoken of. Properly we ought to have gone over the Pedang range on the west direct to Selipuk, but it was not difficult to talk over the Gova, and on June 21 he had fresh yaks and guides ready. The latter were a young man and a boy ten years old in a blue sheepskin. With these we could have gone off anywhere, but I was tired and longed to get home. The valley of the Pedang-tsangpo took us further to the north. It is unusual to find in Tibet such a great longitudinal valley running north and south, for they lie almost always east and west, and produce the peculiar parallelism so characteristic of the country. We passed sixteen tents, and near the last we crossed the Pedang-tsangpo, which runs to the Shovo-tso by a more easterly course. Lobsang caused great amusement when he was attacked by a furious dog, and, having no stones, threw his bright sheath-knife at him; he missed, but the dog took the knife in his teeth and ran off to his master's tent.

Then we rode up to the Abuk-la pass, with a view both magnificent and instructive. The bluish-green Shovo-tso is, like Poru-tso, longest from north-east to south-west, and is surrounded by huge mountains, some of them with eternal snow. To the north, 30° E., we see the pass Ka-la over which the "gold road" runs. The name Ka-la occurs on a map of one of Montgomerie's pundits by a single isolated mountain summit. In reality the Ka-la is the very opposite of a mountain summit, namely, a depression or saddle in a mountain range. We encamped on the southern shore of the Shovo-tso, which lies at an absolute height of 15,696 feet. The water is salt, and round the shore are seen old shore-lines of about the same height as at Poru-tso.

June 22. When we left the western extremity of the Shovo-

tso we saw a large caravan of yaks and sheep which seemed to have the same destination as ourselves. Lobsang found out that the people were *nekoras* or pilgrims on the way to Kang-rinpoche, and that the owner of the caravan was the Governor of Chokchu, Sonam Ngurbu We left them behind and rode up to the pass Tela-mata-la. A horseman approached us at a gallop, and made signs to us to halt. We waited for him, all on the tiptoe of expectation, for we made sure that he brought us a message from Abdul Kerim. Bah! it was only one of Sonam Ngurbu's soldiers who wanted to ask our guides if a spring on the way to Selipuk had any water in it this year. Sonam Ngurbu's caravan had come from Tabie-tsaka and had not heard a word of our men. It seemed as though the earth had swallowed them up. My orders had been that, whatever else they did, they should wait for us on the Buptsang-tsangpo. Doubtless they had been plundered by robbers; and we had only 80 rupees left. I blessed the hour when I decided to keep myself all the maps, notes, sketches, and rock specimens when we parted at Kamba Tsenam's tent. We could obtain money by selling some valuables, and from Selipuk I could send a courier to Thakur Jai Chand in Gartok.

From Tela-mata-la we have again a striking view over almost all the Sur-la range and over the mountainous region of Lavar-gangri to the south of Selipuk. With every day's march the orographical configuration becomes clearer, and soon the leading features of the blank space will be nearly all ascertained.

The temperature again sank at the midsummer season below freezing-point, the reading on June 23 being 25·9°. We rode through a small steep valley up to the Tayep-parva-la (17,887 feet). The ground was so honeycombed with mouse-holes that the horses trod on two or three at once. Little Puppy caught a couple of field-mice by the neck, and we did not pity them. A marmot which had ventured too far from its hole almost fell into Takkar's clutches, but just saved himself in time. At the pass we made the usual halt for observations, and I drew a panorama of the surroundings.

Between north and north-west the horizon is far distant and the country level; only to the north, 5° W., appears a small snow-capped dome, but not another *gangri*. The view over Nganglaring-tso, just below, is grand, all the mountains in shades of pink, and the water of a deep ultramarine. A large part of its eastern half is occupied by a large island, a mountain mass rising out of the water with a contour as irregular as that of the lake itself, all promontories, bays, and capes. To the north-west lie three small islands. No European had ever seen Nganglaring-tso before, nor any pundit. But the pundit sent by Montgomerie in 1867 to Tok-jalung obtained some hazy information about the district "Shellifuk" and the great lake "Ghalaring-tso," which was afterwards inserted in maps of Tibet. The form given by the pundit to the lake, namely, an egg-shape with the longer axis from north to south, does not at all correspond to the reality; for the lake stretches east and west, and its contour could not be more irregular than it is. The pundit places a small island in the northern half, and adds the legend "Monastery on Island." In reality Nganglaring-tso has at least four islands, but not a single monastery.

On Midsummer Day we encamped by the roaring surf (15,577 feet), and on the 25th we crossed the last hilly mountain spur which still separated us from the extensive plain of Selipuk. From its height we again saw the great chain of Sur-la, and to the south the Trans-Himalaya with sixty-three snowy peaks, regular as the teeth of a saw. On the 26th we rode over level country to the west-north-west. On the plain two mounted Tibetans were pursuing a wild ass, which was wounded in the near foreleg and had four dogs at his heels. The dogs did not bite him, but tried to chase the animal in a certain direction. Time after time the men were close on the game and dismounted; they did not shoot, but threw up dust with their hands to frighten the wild ass and drive him as near as possible to their tent, that they might not have to carry the meat far.

Camp 439 was pitched on the bank of the river Sumdang-tsangpo, which flows into the Nganglaring-tso without joining

the rivers Lavar-tsangpo and Aong-tsangpo, farther west, which unite and enter the lake's most western bounds. Here Lobsang caught a wolf cub, a small wild rogue, which much interested Takkar. But Takkar had a great respect for his hereditary enemy and ventured to bite only his tail. Afterwards he became bolder, and when the little creature found himself in a desperate situation, he threw himself into the river to swim over to the other side. Then Takkar gave a yell, jumped in and caught the cub, thrust him down with his paws, seized him with his teeth and brought him to land, where he ate every bit of him.

We followed the river upwards on June 27 and encamped again on its bank opposite the monastery Selipuk-gompa (15,696 feet), the abbot of which, a Kanpo-lama, Jamtse Singe, was also chief of the district in secular affairs. Neither he nor any one else had heard anything of Abdul Kerim, but he was so good as to search in his holy books to find out where our men were, and he came to the conclusion that they were somewhere to the south, and that in twenty days we should either meet them or hear some reliable news of them.

On June 28, at half-past nine in the evening, the country was shaken by an earthquake—the only one I ever experienced in Tibet. However, it had no effect on the good relations between me and the monks and Sonam Ngurbu, the Governor, who was also a guest in the monastery, and had a high lama from Chokchu in his party. The Governor gave us as much *tsamba*, rice, and sugar as would at a pinch last us till we came to Tokchen, and he received a watch in exchange. Of money we had only a few rupees left. I had never been in such straits before. If I ever meet Abdul Kerim again, I thought, he shall get what he deserves and a little more.

When we set up our tents on the last day of June on the Rartse plain, south of Selipuk, Lobsang announced at dusk that four men and four mules were coming to the camp. They were Abdul Kerim, Sedik, Gaffar, and a Tibetan. Our caravan bashi came frightened and confused to my tent, and I thought it better that he should give an account of his

stewardship before I passed sentence on him. He reported that they had come to the appointed rendezvous at the proper time, but there he had been hard pressed by six govas—Gova Parvang among them, who took the lead, and ordered them to leave the place at once and go on to the Tarok-tso. As they had no passport from Lhasa, they could expect no mercy, he said. So they betook themselves to the northern shore of the Tarok-tso, where they waited fourteen days, as the grazing was good and no one interfered with them. They heard contradictory reports about us. At length a nomad died on the lake shore, and a monk from Lunkar-gompa was summoned to his tent to read the prayers for the dead. They met this man, and he said that we had passed the monastery nine days previously. Then they packed up all their belongings intending to hurry after us next morning. But horse-stealers had come in the night and stolen my grey Tikze horse and a mule from Saka-dzong. This event cost them three days, but they never recovered the stolen animals. While Suen, Abdullah, Abdul Rasak, and Sonam Kunchuk followed slowly, the three others made forced marches westwards and now at last they were here and had all our cash with them. Abdul Kerim escaped with a slight reprimand, but I afterwards heard the other men badgering him. We found the others in Kyangrang, and so the whole strength of the company, thirteen men, was complete when, on July 8, we crossed the pass Ding-la, 19,308 feet high, the loftiest pass we had crossed in all this journey in Tibet, and on past the small lake Argok-tso, which lies in the basin of the Aong-tsangpo; and on July 12 we crossed the Surnge-la (17,310 feet). Two days later we came to Tokchen, where another political entanglement detained us nine days. But I cannot stay to give an account of it, for I reached the limit of the space allowed me at Chapter LXIV., and my publisher is impatient.

CHAPTER LXXIII

THE TRANS-HIMALAYA

On the map of the Jesuits, now two hundred years old (D'Anville, 1733), a series of mountains runs on the north side of the upper Brahmaputra, bearing from east to west the following names: Youc, Larkin, Tchimouran Coïran, Tchompa, Lop, Tchour, Takra concla, Kentaisse (Kailas) Latatsi, etc. These mountains and ranges have never been transferred to modern maps of Tibet, probably because geographers regarded the material collected by trained Tibetans as too unreliable and indefinite. Yet these chains of mountains are nothing else but the Trans-Himalaya, though the representation is confused and inexact.

When Brian Hodgson in his map of southern Tibet (*Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxvii.), drew a huge unbroken chain north of, and parallel to, the Tsangpo, he took a step which could only be based on the Jesuits' map and the data he received in the year 1843 from the Maharaja of Nepal. No doubt lofty mountains existed to the north of the Tsangpo—that was known to the Jesuits even in the time of Kang Hi. But Hodgson's hypothetical Nyenchhen-thangla (Trans-Himalaya), which he looks upon as a prolongation of the Karakorum, and the natural boundary between northern and southern Tibet, is by no means an original conception, and is no advance on previous knowledge, or, more correctly, theory. For already, in the year 1840, Dufour had inserted a similar huge uninterrupted chain north of, and parallel to, the Tsangpo, on the map which illustrates the famous description

of the travels of the Lazarist missionary, Father Huc—*Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine, 1844-46.* Dufour's map is even better than Hodgson's, for he has adopted from the Jesuits' map a northern affluent to the Tsangpo, passing through the great range, which, like the Jesuits, he calls Mts. Koïran.

Huc and Gabet were probably the first Europeans to cross the Trans-Himalaya, and one wonders where they made the passage. Probably by the Shang-shung-la along the Mongolian pilgrim road from Kuku-nor and Tsaidam to Lhasa. It is vain to seek any information on the subject in Huc's famous book. During the two years Huc stayed in Macao he worked up the scanty notes he had made on his journey. He mentions Burkhan Bota, Shuga, and Tang-la, and also the large village Nakchu, where the caravans exchange their camels for yaks, but he says not a word about the pass by which he crossed one of the mightiest mountain systems of the world. He says, indeed, that he went over a colossal mountain range, and as its position agreed with that of the Mts. Koïran of Dufour and the Jesuits, he adopts this name, which he certainly had never heard on his journey, and which probably was changed on its way from Tibet to the Jesuits' note-books in Pekin. All he has to say of his journey over the Trans-Himalaya is contained in the following sentences: "La route qui conduit de Na-Ptchu à Lha-Ssa est, en général, rocailleuse et très-fatigante. Quand on arrive à la chaîne des monts Koïran, elle est d'une difficulté extrême" (ii. p. 241).

Another attempt to represent the course of the Trans-Himalaya was made by Trelawney Saunders in his map of Tibet, which is found in Markham's *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London, 1879), and in Edwin T. Atkinson's *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India* (Allahabad, 1882). Like Dufour and Hodgson, Saunders draws a huge continuous chain all through Tibet. For the western parts, north of Manasarowar, and for the eastern, south of Tengri-nor, he has relied on the cartography

of the pundits; the rest, between 82° and 89½° E. long., is partly a reproduction of the Jesuits' map, partly pure fancy, and has not the remotest resemblance to the reality, as will be apparent from a comparison of Saunders' map with mine. I will only point out that the Trans-Himalaya consists not of one chain but of many, and that the source of the Chaktak-tsangpo lies to the south, not to the north of the principal one. All the central and largest part of the system, which I explored, is therefore quite incorrect on Saunders' map.

In the year 1867 Colonel Montgomerie sent out three pundits for the purpose of compiling a map of the country north of Manasarowar. One of them was the incomparable and wonderful Nain Sing, another was the man who was at Yiachan prevented from discovering the source of the Indus. On their way to Tok-jalung they crossed the Trans-Himalaya at the Jukti-la, which they called Gugti-la, assigning to it a height of 19,500 feet: I found its height was 19,070 feet. Mr. Calvert crossed the same pass a year before me. On their return they crossed the Trans-Himalaya by following the eastern branch of the Indus down to where it breaks through the range and unites with the Gartok branch.

A pundit also went between Manasarowar and Tok-jalung, past the Ruldap-tso—a name and lake I sought for east and west in vain, but I will not therefore deny its existence. Moreover, of this pundit's route I have no precise details. It seems likely that he crossed the Trans-Himalaya by a pass called Sar-lung.

On January 8, 1872, one of Montgomerie's explorers, a young trained Tibetan, travelled over the Trans-Himalaya by the Khalamba-la, 17,200 feet high. In Markham's account of this journey it is said that he returned across the mountains by the Dhok-la, though the actual water-parting pass he came to was much more probably the Dam-largen-la. This pass was crossed the following year (1873) by Nain Sing on his famous journey from Leh to Lhasa, which is described so conscientiously by Colonel Sir Henry Trotter. Nain Sing assigns to Dam-langren-la a height of 16,900 feet.

The great pundit A. K., or Krishna, who contends with Nain Sing for the foremost place, crossed the most easterly parts of the Trans-Himalaya on his journey in 1881, and more probably by the pass Shiar-gang-la than the Nub-kong-la, as I have already suggested; but from his map it is difficult to decide whether the Shiar-gang-la is a dividing pass of the first rank or not. In any case, it is situated on the chain which forms the watershed between the Salwin and the Brahmaputra, and is undoubtedly an immediate continuation of the Nien-chen-tang-la, or Trans-Himalaya. A similar assumption is also made by Colonel S. G. Burrard in his and Hayden's admirable work, *A Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalaya Mountains and Tibet* (Calcutta, 1907). On map xvii. in this work Burrard has, quite rightly in my opinion, inserted the prolongation of the range, though we have no sure data about its course.

Thus we find that after Father Huc several of Montgomerie's and Trotter's pundits, as well as Mr. Calvert in the year 1906, crossed the Trans-Himalaya in Tibet. So far as I know, there are only two more names to be added to these—namely, Littledale, who on his bold journey in 1894-95 passed over the system by the pass Guring-la (19,587 feet), and Count de Lesdain, who crossed it by the Khalamba-la in 1905. Both describe the magnificent spectacle Nien-chen-tang-la presents from Tengri-nor, but the latter added nothing to our knowledge of the Trans-Himalaya, for he made use of the same pass, the Khalamba-la, as Montgomerie's pundit. In his narrative, *Voyage au Thibet, par la Mongolie de Pékin aux Indes*, he mentions not a single pass, much less its name. But he followed the western shore of Tengri-nor, and he says (p. 340): "Des massifs de montagnes très durs et absolument enchevêtrés formaient un obstacle insurmontable. En conséquence, je résolus de suivre le premier cours d'eau, dont la direction ferait présumer qu'il se dirigeait vers le Brahmapoutra. C'est ainsi que nous cheminâmes plusieurs jours en suivant les bords d'une rivière sans cesse grossissante, appelée Chang-chu. . . ." This river is the Shang-chu, which comes from the Khalamba-la.

Two Frenchmen and two Englishmen have, then, crossed the Trans-Himalaya before me, besides half a dozen pundits. Farther west in English territory innumerable Europeans have passed over the system, especially by the Chăng-la, where I surmounted it three times. Between the Indus and the Panggong-tso I travelled over the system on November 22, 1907, by the easy pass Tsake-la.

An extraordinarily valuable contribution to the knowledge of the Trans-Himalaya was afforded us by Ryder and Wood on their remarkable journey up the Brahmaputra in the year 1904. They had no opportunity of crossing the system, or even of penetrating a day's journey into the southern transverse valleys, but they took bearings of all the summits visible from their route. And some of these, particularly Lunpo-gangri, are among the very highest which, under a mantle of eternal snow, rise up from the Trans-Himalaya. The absolutely highest is, according to Ryder, 23,255 feet, and is therefore little inferior to Nien-chen-tang-la with its 23,900 feet. Ryder and Burrard took it for granted that these summits stood on a single continuous range, which they represent on their map as the northern watershed of the Brahmaputra. In his text (p. 95), however, Burrard rightly points out that this chain, which he calls "the Kailas Range," is not the watershed, for in some places it is broken through by affluents from the north. Burrard commits the same mistake as Dufour, Hodgson, Saunders, and Atkinson, in assuming the existence of a single continuous range to the north of the Tsangpo. I pondered much myself over this problem, and on a general map of the ranges of Tibet (1905) I inserted two ranges north of the Tsangpo, a conception in accordance with F. Grenard's in his *Carte de l'Asie Centrale* of the year 1899.

A history of geographical exploration in a region so little known as the Trans-Himalaya must naturally be exceeding short and meagre. With all my researches I have not been able to discover any other predecessors than those already mentioned—that is, in those parts of the system which lie within the bounds of Tibet—and not a single one in the

central regions of the Trans-Himalaya. That such an extensive region as southern Tibet has been quite unknown till now, though it lies close to the Indian frontier, has given rise to much reasonable astonishment, and in many circles arguments and proofs, based on more or less apocryphal records and vague hypotheses, have been laboriously sought out to prove that my discoveries have not the priority claimed for them. The maps I have reproduced in facsimile, when carefully compared with my own maps, render any discussion on my part quite superfluous.

I cannot, however, pass over in silence an insinuation that the discoveries I have made are to be found indicated on the famous wall-maps in the Doge's Palace at Venice. The Chief Librarian of the Royal Library in Stockholm, Dr. E. W. Dahlgren, writes in a letter to me: "Only the grossest ignorance and silliness can find on these maps traces of any discoveries previous to yours." Before my return home Professor Mittag-Leffler, Director of the mathematical school in the University of Stockholm, had sent for photographs of these maps with a very detailed description, and he has kindly placed this material at my disposal. This book is not the place in which to publish it, and, besides, the following statement which Dr. Dahlgren has obligingly drawn up at my request makes all further comment unnecessary:

The Wall-Maps in the Sala dello Scudo, in the Doge's Palace at Venice

These maps, four in number, were constructed by the noted cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi in the middle of the sixteenth century, to take the place of older maps which were destroyed by fire in the year 1483; at least it may be safely assumed that two of them, those of East Asia and Africa, are the work of Gastaldi.

The maps represent:

1. Asia from the mouth of the Indus eastwards to China and Japan, as well as the Pacific Ocean and part of America.
2. Asia from Asia Minor to India (Kashmir).
3. Africa.
4. Italy.

Only maps Nos. 1 and 2 have any interest for Sven Hedin. They correspond completely with the photographs procured by Professor Mittag-Leffler.

All the maps were restored by Francisco Grisellini about the middle of the eighteenth century. In map No 2 great alterations seem to have been made in geographical details as well as in the text and in the decoration. As the map extends no farther east than Kashmir it has, of course, no connection with Sven Hedin's discoveries.

Map No 1, on the other hand, has in many essential respects preserved its original character. We can undoubtedly form a good notion of its original appearance by comparing it with the maps in Ramusio's work *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi* (2nd edition, Venice, 1554) and with Gastaldi's *Tercia Parte dell' Asia* (Venice, 1561). The resemblance to the former is very striking. In these maps, as in the wall-maps, the south is to the top.

On all these maps there is very great confusion in the representation of the river systems of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. The mountains are drawn in at random, and even the Himalayas cannot be identified with complete certainty, much less the ranges of Central Asia. As the map was chiefly designed to illustrate the travels of Marco Polo, it naturally gives no information about countries he did not visit.

E. W. DAHLGREN.

Father Huc concludes the account of his journey with the following remarkable words: "Mais il ne suffit pas toujours du zèle de l'écrivain pour faire connaître des contrées où il n'a jamais mis le pied. Ecrire un Voyage en Chine après quelques promenades aux factories de Canton et aux environs de Macao, c'est peut-être s'exposer beaucoup à parler de chose qu'on ne connaît pas suffisamment . . . il est en général assez difficile de faire des découvertes dans un pays sans y avoir pénétré."

It was with such truths in my mind that I began the journey described in this book, the object of which was that set forth by Sir Clements Markham, when in connection with Littledale's last journey he made the following statement (*Geographical Journal*, vol. vii. p. 482): "In the whole length from Tengri-nor to the Mariam-la pass no one has crossed them (the Trans-Himalaya), so far as we know . . . and I

believe nothing in Asia is of greater geographical importance than the exploration of this range of mountains."

It is not for me to decide how far I have achieved my aim, but when I passed over the Trans-Himalaya for the eighth time at the Surnge-la, I had at least the satisfaction of seeing all the old hypotheses fall down like a house of cards, and a new ground-plan laid down on the map of Asia, where before the blank patch yawned with its alluring "Unexplored."

I have no space here for a complete monograph of the Trans-Himalaya, or, indeed, the material for it, until the bearings and heights of the peaks have been worked out, the rock specimens identified, and a detailed map constructed from the sheets I drew. It will take a couple of years to work up the material. I will here only communicate some general facts, and will begin by citing the passes of first rank as watersheds, appending the names of the travellers who have crossed some of them:

Shiar-gang-la	Krishna, 1881	
Shang-shung-la	Huc, 1845	
Dam-largen-la	Nain Sing, 1873	16,903 feet.
Guring-la	Littledale, 1895	19,587 ,,
Tsebo-la		
Shugu-la		
Khalamba-la	Pundit, 1872	17,200 ,,
Do.	de Lesdain, 1905	
Sela-la	Hedin, 1907	18,064 ,,
Chang-la-Pod-la	Hedin, 1907	18,284 ,,
Sha-la		
Angden-la	Hedin, 1907	18,514 ,,
Tsalam-nakta-la		
Dombe-la		
Nakbo-kongdo-la		
Sangmo-bertik-la	Hedin, 1908	19,095 ,,
Saggo-la		
Dicha-la		
Samye-la	Hedin, 1908	18,133 ,,
Dsalung-la		
Lungmar-la		
Pechen-la		

ASIATIC SOCIETY

Lungnak-la		
Yor-la		
Ganglung-la		
Men-la		
Pedang-la		
Gebbyi-la		
Yilung-la		
Tarkyang-la		
Surnge-la	Pundit? Hedin, 1908	17,310 feet
Tseti-lachen-la	Hedin, 1907	17,933 ,,
Jukti-la	Nain Sing, 1867	
Do.	Calvert, 1906	
Do.	Hedin, 1907	19,070 ,,

It has, then, been my lot to cross eight Trans-Himalayan passes, while seven have been crossed by other travellers. Seven of my passes were unknown before. Of the others I have seen the Dicha-la and Men-la, while of the remainder I have only gathered oral information. The Jukti-la is the watershed between the two headwaters of the Indus, the Tseti-lachen-la between the Sutlej and the Indus, the Surnge-la between the Sutlej and the Nganglaring-tso. Shiar-gang-la and Shang-shung-la lie on the watershed between the Salwin and the Brahmaputra. All the others lie on the great continental watershed between the ocean and the isolated drainage of the plateau. It appears from the list that all the passes crossed before by Europeans and pundits belong to the eastern and western parts of the system. Between the Khalamba-la and the Surnge-la the Trans-Himalaya had not been crossed in a single line, and it was exactly between these two passes that the great white space was situated. All that was known of it was the peaks fixed by Ryder and Wood, and some summits seen by Nain Sing from the north. If the Pundit's journey between Manasarowar and Ruldap-tso be disregarded, of which I have no information, the interval between the Khalamba-la and the Jukti-la measures 590 miles, or about as far as from Linköping to Haparanda, or from London to Dornoch Firth. And between these limits lie all the passes by crossing which I was able to trace the course of the Trans-Himalaya, and

prove that its known eastern and western sections are connected and belong to the same mountain system, and that this system is one of the loftiest and mightiest in the world, only to be compared with the Himalayas, the Karakorum, Arka-tag, and Kuen-lun. Between the Shiar-gang-la and Yasin, not far from the sharp bend of the Indus, its length amounts to 1400 miles, but if it can be shown that the Trans-Himalaya merges into the Hindu-Kush and continues along the Salwin, its length extends to 2500 miles. On the north and south its boundaries are sharp and clearly defined; the northern is formed by the central lakes discovered by Nain Sing and myself, and the southern by the unheard of Indus-tsangpo valley. In breadth it is inferior to the Himalayas, and its peaks are lower, but the heights of the Trans-Himalayan passes are considerably greater than those of the Himalayas. The average height of the five following Himalayan passes—Shar-khalep-la, Man-da-la, Sheru-la, No-la and Kore- or Photu-la—is 16,736 feet, while the average height of my first five Trans-Himalayan passes is 18,400 feet. It may be said generally that the dividing passes in the Trans-Himalaya of the first rank are 1600 feet higher than in the Himalayas. But the highest peak of the Himalayas, Mount Everest, with its 29,000, is 5100 feet higher than the Nien-chen-tang-la, the culminating point, as far as we know. Herewith are connected the different forms of relief predominating in the two systems; the crests of the Trans-Himalaya are flatter, its valleys shallower and broader, while the crests of the Himalayas are sharp and pointed, its valleys deep and much eroded. The former system is more compact and massive than the latter, as we may expect if we remember that the Himalayas are deluged by the precipitation of the south-west monsoon, and that its waters have for untold thousands of years degraded its valleys, while the Trans-Himalaya on the dry plateau country receives a comparatively insignificant share of the monsoon rain. Were it possible to compare the volumes of the two systems, we should no doubt find that the northern is much more massive than the southern, for such a comparison must proceed from sea-level, and though the Trans-Himalaya

is the narrower of the two, its ascent begins from heights of 10,000 to 16,000 feet, from the Tsangpo valley, while the Himalayas rise from sea-level or a few hundred feet above it. As a watershed the Trans-Himalaya occupies a higher and more important place than the Himalayas. In the west the Himalayas parts the waters between the Indus and some of its tributaries, and in the east the system is a divide between the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. But every drop of water which falls on the Himalayas goes down to the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, all the central Trans-Himalaya is a watershed between the Indian Ocean on the south and the enclosed drainage area of the plateau depression on the north. Only in its western section is the Trans-Himalaya also a watershed between the Indus and some of its right-hand tributaries, and in its eastern between the Salwin and Brahmaputra. Within the boundaries of Tibet there is only one river which takes its rise from the northern flank of the Trans-Himalaya and breaks through the system by a traverse valley; but this river is a lion, and is called by the Tibetans the Lion river, the Singi-kamba or Indus. The Salwin also springs from the northern flank of the system, but finds its way to the ocean without passing through the mountains. All the other rivers rising on the northern slopes, of which the Buptsang-tsangpo and the Soma-tsangpo are the largest, flow into the undrained salt lakes on the north. Only in the central parts of the Trans-Himalaya, stretching, however, over a distance of nearly 600 miles, does the continental watershed coincide with the main axis of the system, for to the west the watershed runs northwards from the source of the Indus, and then westwards, so as to leave the Panggong-tso within the isolated drainage basin of Tibet, and in the east runs northwards from the region between the source streams of the Salwin and Tengri-nor.

I have called this book Trans-Himalaya, because the incidents and adventures described in these two volumes occurred in this huge mountain system lying to the north of the Tsangpo and in the country to the north and south of it. When I first crossed the dividing range at the Sela-la I thought of retaining

the name Hodgson had assigned to it, that is, Nien-chen-tang-la, and I did not change my mind after crossing the Chang-la-Pod-la and Angden-la, for these three passes lie on one and the same range, which on the southern shore of Tengri-nor is called Nien-chen-tang-la. After crossing the Tseti-lachen-la and the Jukti-la I supposed that these passes lay on the western prolongation of the Nien-chen-tang-la, and that the conception of Hodgson, Saunders, Atkinson, Burrard, and Ryder was correct. But after the second journey right through Tibet, and after I had crossed Bongba in several directions and found that there was no question of a single continuous range, but that a whole collection of ranges quite independent of one another existed, I perceived that the name Nien-chen-tang-la, which only denotes one of all these ranges, could not be given to the whole system. Equally inappropriate would be the names Lunpo-gangri, Kamchung-gangri, Targo-gangri, or any other local name. Saunders' "Gangri Mountains" I consider still more unsuitable, for every mountain in Tibet clothed with eternal snow is called a *gangri*, and the name in this connection would have a meaningless sound. Neither could I accept Burrard's "The Kailas Range." A name must be found suited to the whole of this intimately connected association of mountain ranges, a geographical conception which would leave no room for misunderstanding, and I decided to call the whole system, the connection and continuity of which I had succeeded in proving, the Trans-Himalaya.

Among English geographers many have approved of this name and an equal number have disapproved. To the latter category belongs Colonel Burrard, who points out that for some years back all the regions lying beyond the Himalayas have been called Trans-Himalayan. And in a letter he has lately written to me he says:

> Pupils of Montgomerie naturally ask why an old word should be given a new meaning when it is possible to invent any number of new names for newly discovered mountains. I do not see that it is necessary to give an important name to newly discovered mountains. A new name will become important because of the

mountains to which it is attached, and your mountains would have rendered any new name important.

I cannot share Colonel Burrard's view, for I answer that just because of the circumstance that Montgomerie's pupils, officials of the Survey of India and pundits, have for fifty years and more called the country north of the Himalayas "The Trans-Himalayan regions," it was incumbent on me not to reject this name for the mountain system which can be nothing else but the Trans-Himalaya *par excellence*.

To give a quotation from the other side, I will here reproduce an expression of opinion from Lord Curzon, formerly Viceroy of India, whose knowledge of Asia is unsurpassed. In the *Geographical Journal*, April 1909, he says:

Alongside of this great discovery (Bongba and Chokchu) I would place the tracing for hundreds of miles and the assurance of a definite orographical existence to the mighty mountain palisade or series of palisades to which he has, in my opinion very appropriately, given the title of the Trans-Himalaya. This range has been surmised to exist in its entire length for many years; it has been crossed at its extremities by Littledale and by native surveyors. But it was reserved for Dr. Hedin to trace it on the spot and to place it upon the map in its long, unbroken, and massive significance. . . . It is no mean addition to human knowledge that we should realize the assured existence of one of the greatest mountain masses in the world. As regards the name which Dr. Hedin has given to it, I will only say that the desiderata for the title of a new and momentous geographical discovery appear to be these: (1) that the name should if possible be given by the principal discoverer; (2) that it should not be unpronounceable, unwriteable, over-recondite, or obscure; (3) that it should if possible possess some descriptive value; and (4) should not violate any acknowledged canons of geographical nomenclature. The name Trans-Himalaya combines all these advantages, and it has a direct Central Asian analogy in the Trans-Alai, which is a range of mountains standing in the same relation to the Alai that Trans-Himalaya will do to Himalaya. I am not in the least impressed by the fact that the name was once given to another range, where its unsuitability secured its early extinction. Any attempts to substitute another title on the present occasion will, in my opinion, be foredoomed to failure.

My long journey backwards and forwards over the Trans-Himalaya cannot be regarded as more than a cursory and defective reconnaissance of a country hitherto unknown. It is easier to go to Lhasa with a force armed to the teeth, and shoot down the Tibetans like pheasants if they stand in the way, than to cross Tibet in all directions for two long years with four Governments and all the authorities of the land as opponents, twelve poor Ladakis as companions, and not a single man as escort. It is no merit of mine that I was long able to maintain a position which from the first seemed untenable. The same lucky star looked down, as often before, on my lonely course through vast Asia, and it is twenty-four years since I first took up my pilgrim staff. I have been able to follow and lay down only the chief geographical lines; between my routes many blank spaces are still left, and there is sufficient detailed work for generations of explorers and travellers more thoroughly prepared and better equipped than myself.

Go, then, out into the world thou ringing and sonorous name for one of the world's mightiest mountain systems, and find thy way into geographical text-books, and remind children in the schools of the snow-crowned summits on the Roof of the World, among which the monsoon storms have sung their deafening chorus since the beginning. As long as I live, my proudest memories, like royal eagles, will soar round the cold desolate crags of the Trans-Himalaya.

CHAPTER LXXIV

SIMLA

LIKE a troop of beggars and knights of the road my twelve servants and I left Tokchen on July 24. We had stayed there nine days with nothing to do but watch the monsoon rain, which I had incautiously promised the natives, pelting down on the hills. The authorities of the place insisted this time that, as we were not furnished with a passport from Lhasa, we had no right to make use of the great high-road to Ladak, but must turn back to the interior of Tibet whence we had come. If I had not already had enough of the great blank, I would have agreed to their demand with pleasure, but I was now weary and longed for home, and as they refused the assistance and the transport facilities we required, we set out on foot with the baggage on our last ten horses and mules. I had still the white horse from Kamba Tsenam's tent at my disposal. We had no escort, for the authorities wished to be quite clear of blame in case they were called to account. By the holy lake, where we followed the northern shore by known ways, we at length found a tramp who offered to show us the way to the Totling monastery.

In Langbo-nan I visited hastily the young abbot, as sympathetic and good-natured as the year before, and at Chiu-gompa we met our old friend Tundup Lama, fretful, melancholy, and weary of his lonely cloister life. Large streams now emptied their water into both lakes, and with a feeling of regret I left again the scene of so many precious memories.

Before we came to the monastery of Tirtapuri we had to

cross several of the rivers which bring their tribute from the Trans-Himalaya to the Sutlej. Three of them were enormously swollen after the continuous rains, and rolled their volumes of greyish-brown foaming water over treacherous blocks. It boiled and seethed between the cliffs, and it carried along and overturned the slippery boulders. How I trembled in mortal anxiety lest the harvest so laboriously gathered in the last long winter should all be lost by a single false step.

We came to the temple of Tirtapuri in pouring rain. Lobsang, Ġulam, Kutus, Tubges, Suen, and Kunchuk were to accompany me hence to Simla, but Abdul Kerim and the other five received their pay and gratuities, and took their way home to Leh through Gartok. I did not know the road to Simla, but on the map it seemed to be nearer than to Ladak, and therefore I expected that my party would arrive first at its destination. But this road is very wild and romantic, and the land is deeply excavated by the affluents of the Sutlej, and one might imagine that one had suddenly been transported to the cañons of the Colorado. One day we marched rapidly up an ascent of 3000 feet, and the next we went down as far, so that the distance was at least double as great as it appeared on the map, and Abdul Kerim reached Leh long before I was near Simla. Therefore the first news of us came from him, and not from myself, and in some quarters the worst fears were entertained for my safety. It seemed strange that my servants reached their home safe and sound while I myself was still missing.

We parted with floods of tears on August 1, and my party travelled past the three monasteries, Dongbo, Dava, and Mangnang, and came to Totling-gompa on the 13th, near which Father Andrade, three hundred years ago, lodged in the now decayed town of Tsaparang. Here I met the Hindu doctor Mohanlal, who gave me the first news of the outer world. Through him I heard, with deep regret, of the death of King Oscar, which had occurred more than eight months before. Mohanlal also informed me of the growing unrest in India and of the anxiety my friends felt on my account.

Thakur Jai Chand had been instructed by the Indian Government to spare no efforts to find out whether I was still living or not. He had sent out some Tibetan freebooters in various directions, and promised 50 rupees to any one who could furnish any certain information of my fate—this is the price he valued me at. Abdul Kerim had reached Gartok in the best of health, and was summoned to the Garpun, who exclaimed: "Your Sahib is a dreadful man; he will not be satisfied until I lose my head!" Old Hajji Nazer Shah, who had so conscientiously equipped my last caravan, had died the preceding winter.

When we left Tokchen on July 24 we were delighted at the thought that we should at every step be nearer to lower country and a denser and warmer atmosphere. A month later we were at a greater height than at Tokchen, and saw the country covered with snow, and heard the hail patter on our dilapidated tents. But at Shipki we again set them up in a garden dressed in the rich beauty of summer, and heard the wind murmur in the spreading crowns of the apricot trees. Shipki is the last village in Tibet. From this garden oasis begins the steep ascent to the Shipki-la, which is reached after attaining a height of six Eiffel Towers one upon another. Here we stood on the frontier between Tibet and India. I turned and let my eyes roam once more over these awfully desolate and barren mountains where my dreams had been realised, and my lucky star had shed a clearer and more friendly light than ever before. Farewell, home of wild asses and antelopes, holy land of the Tashi Lama, of Tso-mavang and the Tsangpo, into whose mysterious valleys the stranger has found his way only by enduring two Arctic winters and by driving a flock of refractory sheep! I seemed to take farewell of the best of my youth and the finest chapter in the story of my life.

On August 28 we encamped in the village of Poo, and I spent two memorable days in the hospital house of the Moravian missionaries. Messrs. Marx and Schnabel and their amiable families overwhelmed me with kindness, and now I was deluged with news from the outer world—it was like listening to the breakers on the coast of the ocean. I had not

seen a European for more than two years, and I looked myself like a Tibetan footpad. But the missionaries rigged me out at once in European summer clothes and set an Indian helmet on my head.

A few days later we came to Kanam-gompa, where Alexander Csoma Körösi eighty years ago studied Lamaist learning as a monk, and more than any one else communicated to the scholars of the West the occult mysteries of this religion. How silent and quiet our life had been up on the expanse of Chang-tang! Now the dizzy depths of the valley are filled with the roar of the falling stream, and the thunder of the water is re-echoed from the precipitous cliffs. How bare and scanty was the soil of Tibet, and now we listen daily to the whisper of mild breezes in the deep dark coniferous forests that clothe the slopes of the Himalayas.

Still lower runs the road, still warmer is the air. My trusty friend, big shaggy Takkar, looks at me with questioning eyes. He loves not the summer's perfumed garlands nor the variegated zone of meadows. He remembers the free life on the open plains, he misses the fights with the wolves of the wilderness, and he dreams of the land of everlasting snowstorms. One day we saw him drink of a spring which poured its water across the path, and then lie down in the cool shade of the forest. He had done so many times before, but we should never see him repeat it. He turned and galloped up towards lonely Tibet. He parted with sorrow in his heart from his old master, I knew; but he thought he would ask the missionaries in Poo to send me a greeting. One morning he was found lying outside the gate to the court of the Mission-house, and, true to his old habit, he would let no one go in or out. He was hospitably received, and started a new life with a chain round his neck. I still receive from time to time, through Mr. Marx, greetings from old Takkar, who so faithfully defended my tent when I travelled in disguise through his own country.

In the Club des Asiatiques in Paris I once dined with Madame Massieu, who has accomplished so many wonderful

journeys in Asia. Roland Bonaparte and Henry of Orleans were present, as I vividly remembered when on September 7 I met the far-travelled Parisian lady in the station-house of Taranda. We had much to talk about when we contributed to the cost of a common dinner. Untouched by years, youthful and enthusiastic, Madame Massieu afterwards undertook a bold journey to Khatmandu.

With growing uneasiness I approached the hour when, after nearly a year's complete silence, I was again to receive letters from home, and I wondered whether I should break them open and read them without any cause for sorrow. The post met me at Gaura on September 9. I read all the evening, all night, and all the following day, and I was able to take the last days journey to Simla in comfort, for I was spared any untoward news and knew that all was well at home. Now the wind whispered more gently than ever in the Himalayan cedars, and the roar of the Sutlej sounded like the roll of drums in a triumphal march.

In Kotgar I was present at evensong in the missionaries' church. How strange to hear again the soft soothing tones of the organ, and as an unworthy Christian pilgrim in a Christian temple remember the solitude of the past years.

The following day I marched along the road in the company of my men for the last time, for near Narkanda a rickshaw met me, sent by Colonel Dunlop Smith. I left them, to hurry on without delay, while they were to follow in the usual order of march. How pleasant to lean against the back of the little two-wheeled vehicle and roll away at a rapid pace under the shady canopy of the deodars!

September 15 was a great day for me. I stayed at the bungalow of Fagu, and this camp, where I was quite alone, was No. 499. Simla, therefore, would be 500. It felt very strange to stand on the boundary between the wilderness and the most refined civilization. At the breastwork of the excellent carriage-road sat a gentleman in his rickshaw; it was my friend Mr. Edward Buck, Reuter's correspondent. This is the beginning, I thought; and on I went on this last day's journey.

The fine imposing town appears in the distance on the slopes of its hills and the white houses peep out from among the trees. A young maiden takes a snap of us with her camera, but it is early in the morning, and without further adventures we take refuge at a gentlemen's outfitters, for in spite of the clothes from Poo I must undergo a complete renovation before I can present myself before the doors of the Viceregal Lodge.

What a total contrast to the lonely life I had led for two long years! On September 16 a State ball took place, and I heard again the crunching sound on the sand of the court as innumerable rickshaws bore guests to the ball. Rustling silk, glittering jewels, brilliant uniforms—in an unbroken line the *élite* of Simla pass between satellites with their tall turbans and shining lances. God save the King! Followed by their staff Their Excellencies enter, and open the dance to the notes of a waltz of Strauss. It was just as in May 1906, and the twenty-eight months that had intervened seemed to me like a strange fantastic dream.

The first days I stayed in the house of my noble old friend Colonel Dunlop Smith, and had now an opportunity of thanking him and his amiable ladies for the trouble they had taken in connection with the consignment to Gartok the year before. Then I moved over to the Viceregal Lodge, and again enjoyed the same boundless hospitality with Lord and Lady Minto. From my window I saw again, sharp and clear, the crests of the Himalayas, and beyond the mountains and valleys of Tibet stretched out in a boundless sea. What wealth and luxury! I lived like a prince, walked on soft rugs and meditated, lay and read Swedish journals in a deep soft bed, by electric light, and bathed in a porcelain bath, attended by Hindus in the viceregal livery—I who had lately gone in rags and tended sheep.

On September 24 a hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen in full dress were assembled in the State room in the Viceregal Lodge. The occasion was a lecture, and on the dais hung with gold-embroidered brocade, where the thrones usually stand,

was set up a large map of Tibet. The front seats were occupied by the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, Lord Kitchener of Khartum, the Governor of the Panjab, the Maharajas of Alwar and Gwalior; and among the guests might be seen generals and superior officers, State secretaries, men of science, and members of the diplomatic corps then present in Simla. The Military Secretary, Colonel Victor Brooke, came forward and announced the arrival of the Viceroy and Lady Minto. I was trembling with stage fright, but before I knew anything about it, my opening words, "Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen," sounded through the brilliant saloon, and then followed an account of my last journey. It was one o'clock in the morning before I concluded, and after a most flattering speech from Lord Minto the guests withdrew to the late supper.

My six Ladakis and our seven remaining animals stayed in a *serai* below the palace. I often went and talked to them, and played a while with my old travelling companion Little Puppy. But the time passed quickly, and soon the last day came. I embraced and squeezed Little Puppy, stroked his head, and found it hard to tear myself away. He was put out by his master's elegant costume, and had a melancholy questioning expression, as though he suspected that the bond between us was loosed, and that we should never see each other again. We had shared everything in common from the time he was born below the snowy Karakorum pass, and to part from dogs is the hardest trial of all; to bid men farewell is not so distressing.

At our arrival in Simla I had given them 60 rupees each for new clothing, and in the bazaar they had found some old cast-off uniforms with bright metal buttons, which they thought grand and becoming. On the neck lappets were the words "Guard, London S.W. Railway," and how they found their way to India I do not know. But in these uniforms and in red fezzes my men assembled in the palace court on the last day of September. They were allowed to keep our seven horses and mules, saddles, tents, skin coats, bed furniture, and

everything. My white horse they were to sell in Leh and divide the price. Gulam took charge of Little Puppy, and undertook to see that he did not suffer want in the future—it was like breaking up an old home. Besides his pay, every man received a present of 100 rupees, and their expenses to Leh four times over. Lord and Lady Minto were present at the last farewell, and the Viceroy made them a short cheery speech. It was a sad parting, and even the calm Lobsang, who was amazed at the wealth and splendour of Simla, wept like a child as with heavy step he followed his comrades down to their waiting animals. "What faithfulness! what devotion!" exclaimed Lady Minto with feeling; "their tears are more expressive than words."

At the beginning of October the Viceroy and Lady Minto set out on an excursion into the mountains, and after a hearty farewell and warm thanks for all the kindness they had showered on me, I remained lonely and forlorn in the great palace. My steamer would not leave Bombay for a week, and I was delighted to be the guest of Lord Kitchener in his residence, Snowdon, during the five days I was yet to stay in Simla. I shall never forget these days. My room was decorated with flowers, and on a table stood fourteen books on Tibet, chosen from the General's library to supply me with entertaining reading. With the aides-de-camp Captains Wyllie and Basset, merry fellows and good comrades, we lived like four bachelors, took breakfast, lunch, and dinner together, and spent the evening in the billiard-room, on the mantelpiece of which was the appropriate motto, "Strike, and fear not."

In the afternoon the General took me out along the road leading to Tibet. We then talked of the future of Europe in Asia and Africa, and I gained a greater insight than I had ever done before into Lord Kitchener's life and work in Egypt.

But the days at Snowdon also came to an end, and on October 11, when the people were flocking to church, I was driven by the victor of Africa to the station, where I took a

last farewell of the man for whose exploits I have always felt a boundless admiration. At Summerhill station, below the Viceregal Lodge, I exchanged a last shake of the hand with my dear friend Dunlop Smith, and then the white houses of Simla vanished in the distance, and the train rolled down to the heat of India and the great lonely sea.

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